

2021/22

# THE BERLIN PULSE

GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY  
IN PERSPECTIVE

With contributions by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Patricia Espinosa,  
Kevin Rudd, Sheikh Hasina and others

# The Berlin Pulse Survey 2021/22

31%

of mentions refer to Afghanistan as the biggest challenge for German foreign policy

53%

see Germany as a forerunner in climate policy within the EU

55%

perceive China's growing influence as negative

44%

view the United States as Germany's most important partner in foreign policy

51%

say Olaf Scholz would represent German interests as well as Angela Merkel

65%

of mentions refer to a common European foreign and security policy as priority for the next chancellor

63%

think Europe will be able to compete against China/United States in technological innovation

76%

are in favour of limiting the power of large technology firms like Google or Facebook

79%

think the German Bundeswehr should be involved in foreign conflicts to protect the security of Germany's allies

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by Körber-Stiftung

## Dear Readers,

Welcome to *The Berlin Pulse*!

As this fifth edition was being finalized, all eyes were on Germany. In the September federal elections, Germans decided not only about their next government, but also about the future of one of the biggest and economically most powerful countries in Europe. International interest in the outcome of the elections and Germany's next government was high and the German capital full of correspondents. Meanwhile, foreign policy and the future of Germany's role in the world played only a marginal role in the campaign.

Although it is not unusual that voters and the media are more interested in the chancellor candidates' positions regarding tax policy than their stance on relations with China or defence spending, the gap between international expectations and German self-perception was striking.

Attentive readers of *The Berlin Pulse* are already familiar with this gap. Since 2017, our representative survey of German attitudes towards foreign policy shows that a majority of Germans prefer restraint over stronger international involvement. This attitude of the German public does not easily change one way or the other. Even a foreign policy earthquake like the debacle in Afghanistan did not have a notable impact.

This edition of *The Berlin Pulse* 'minds the gap' by letting international decision-makers and experts have a say about their expectations of post-Merkel Germany and by juxtaposing their positions with German public opinion. It also looks at the international implications of two megatrends: the digital transformation and climate change. As Cédric O and Marietje Schaake argue in the second chapter, German and European political inaction in the digital sphere would be disastrous for democracies around the world. And Patricia Espinosa and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, among others, remind us in the third chapter of the impact a failed response to the climate crisis would have for everyone. The public is aware of this: In this year's survey, Germans mention climate change and the environment as one of the greatest foreign policy challenges for their country.

*The Berlin Pulse* takes the analysis of these imminent changes – in Germany, in the digital sphere and with regard to climate change – one step further by asking about the chances related to them. When asked about the increasingly digital world, a majority of Germans and also of Americans see it rather as an opportunity than a threat. Watch out for more 'Chances in Change' in the following pages.

Finally, I would like to thank Pew Research Center for our longstanding cooperation and our editor Julia Ganter. It is to her credit that I can now wish you a multifaceted and insightful read!



**THOMAS PAULSEN**  
November 2021



**THOMAS PAULSEN**  
Member of the Executive  
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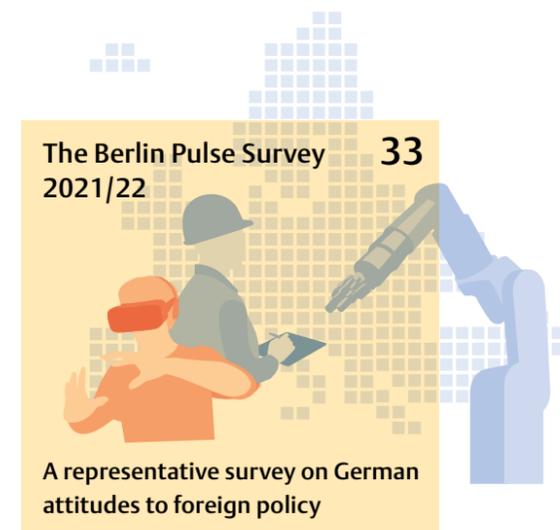
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# Chances in Change

Even if Germany's foreign policy will be marked by continuity, the world is changing and Germany must deal with this

**A**ngela Merkel's 16-year-long chancellorship showed that, given the choice, German voters prefer continuity. With her not running for re-election, they voted for change – because they did not have another option. But will a new face at the top of Germany's government be the only change one should expect?

Speculation about a post-Merkel change in Germany's foreign policy started long before election day and it intensified with every percentage point The Greens and the Free Democratic Party gained in the polls. The Greens have a strongly values-based approach that can also be found in the programme of the Free Democratic Party. Both will have to prove that this will last when in government and confronted with the need to simultaneously uphold German economic interests in countries like Russia or China – a difficult balancing act that Merkel handled over the years with increasing pragmatism. In addition, as junior coalition partners, the two parties' room for manoeuvre will depend on their capability to recapture some of the foreign policy influence lost to the chancellery during the last years.

Apart from that, the instability of world affairs in the coming years will determine how much time Germany's government will have for fundamental debates about foreign policy shifts. An escalation in the Taiwan Strait, new pandemics, or climate

emergencies are just three of a plethora of imaginable troublemakers. Merkel was respected as a tireless crisis manager – from the financial crisis to the euro crisis, the refugee policy crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events made her an expert in reacting and led to her international reputation as a cautious mediator rather than risky action taker. This approach was the perfect fit for the foreign policy soul of the German public: the survey results of *The Berlin Pulse* show for the fifth year in a row that most Germans prefer restraint.

## No more avoiding change

The new government will not be able to neglect the changes happening in its surroundings by continuing with this cautious style of foreign policy. The digital transformation empowers new actors such as Big Tech companies and forces societies to renegotiate fundamental rights like freedom of speech or to fight for new ones such as public access to data. In addition, the climate crisis is already changing the reality of parts of the global population. Not only abroad but also at home, as Germans had to learn painfully this summer. Merely reacting will no longer be sufficient when it comes to tackling climate change or the digital transformation.

One way for foreign policy to respond successfully to these developments is to embrace them

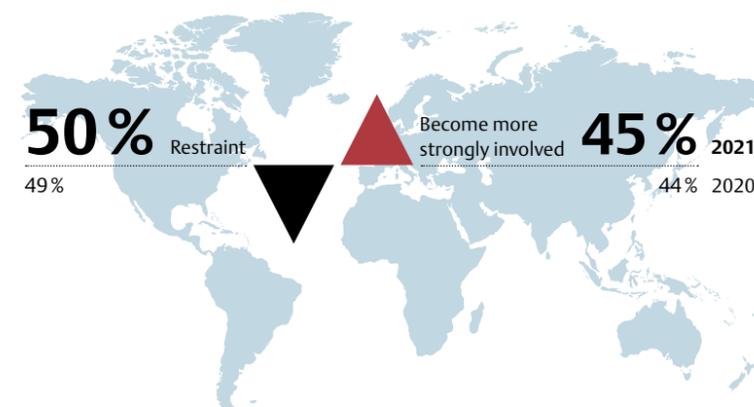
as chances. This can be done by creating the international prerequisites for competitiveness and leadership in both areas. As this year's survey results of *The Berlin Pulse* show, a vast majority of German respondents is optimistic when it comes to Europe's competitiveness in the technological sphere: 63 per cent say that Europe will be able to compete against the United States and China. They are equally hopeful about the impact of an increasingly digital world, which 51 per cent perceive as an opportunity rather than a threat for democracy. They are also self-confident: one-in-two sees Germany as a forerunner rather than a laggard in European climate policy and names the European Union as most strongly engaged actor in the fight against climate change. And, even if 50 per cent of respondents favour restraint over stronger international involvement, they tend to be more assertive when it comes to the digital sphere. Six-in-ten say that Germany should react with offensive countermeasures when faced with a cyberattack.

## Three strategies for more leadership

A forward-looking German foreign policy could build on the optimism and self-confidence of the public in these two areas of change and liberate itself from the cautious approach of the Merkel years.

*The Berlin Pulse* survey results reveal three strategies that foreign policy makers could use to convince the public of the need for a broader German leadership role despite their historic predilection for restraint. First, by strengthening a common European foreign and security policy. This was mentioned by most German respondents as the European policy goal Germany's new chancellor should promote particularly. It would signal to the public that Germany will not lead alone. Second, and related, by putting more effort in the revitalization of transatlantic relations. *The Berlin Pulse* results show a turnaround in German perceptions of the transatlantic partnership. In September 2020 eight-in-ten respondents considered US-German relations as bad; one year later seven-in-ten perceived them as good. A 'Biden effect' is also reflected in responses about Germany's most important

International responsibility: Should Germany become more strongly involved in international crises?



partner: 44 per cent of respondents name the United States compared to 10 per cent the previous year. Third, by convincing the youngest generation of Germans to become their ally for change. Sixty-five per cent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 favour stronger international involvement over restraint. Young Germans also consider climate change as the biggest foreign policy challenge. And 71 per cent – 20 points more than the average for all age groups – perceive the digital transformation as an opportunity for democracy. To achieve this goal, the new government must respond to their demands.

Over the past one and a half decade, Germans became increasingly change-averse. The new government must remind the public – and itself – of the necessity to proactively address the existential changes ahead. This will only work if it does so from a leadership position together with others. With this in mind, even the lethargic German foreign policy soul might be changed. ✕



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# Wind of Change: A New Era for German Foreign Policy?



Germany is at a crossroads. After 16 years under Angela Merkel's steady stewardship, Europe's largest country faces what Germans fear most: change. The nearer Merkel's departure, the harder it has been for Germans to accept the inevitable. More than 80 per cent hold a positive view of her. But is Germany really so enthusiastic about Merkel or just nervous about what lies in store? On one level, enthusiasm for Merkel is easy to understand. Germany is more prosperous than ever, unemployment is low and the country is admired far and wide. So much so, in fact, that nearly 60 per cent of Germans say their country's influence will remain intact in the post-Merkel era, according to *The Berlin Pulse* survey from May. And yet, the ground is shifting. Even die-hard fans know that Merkel's style of leadership – to hold off making decisions for as long as possible, which has come to be known in German as *merkeln* – is no longer sustainable at home or on the world stage.

When it comes to foreign policy, Merkel's genius has been to convince Germans that they had nothing to worry about. Whether the issue was Russia, China or even the United States, she diverted the public's attention by laying what one political rival once described as a 'layer of fog' over the issues. At her final summer press conference in July, Merkel was peppered with questions about everything from how women governed differently from men to where she planned to spend election day. She faced few questions on foreign policy, however. China – the central challenge facing the West in the coming decades – was not even mentioned.

The best example of Merkel's talent in shifting public attention away from foreign policy is Nord Stream 2, the controversial pipeline linking Russia and Germany's Baltic coast. She downplayed objections from the United States, Poland and Ukraine, calling the pipeline a 'commercial deal' outside the purview of politics. Meanwhile, her surrogates characterized Nord Stream 2 as a contribution towards *Ostpolitik*, which many Germans are convinced played a central role in bringing down the Berlin Wall. What is not to like?

One finds a similar pattern across Germany's foreign policy portfolio from the Western Balkans to Ukraine and Hungary: a slavish devotion to 'dialogue' and conferences, creating an impression of progress that upon closer inspection turns out to be little more than a mirage.

Merkel's foreign policy legacy is one of frozen conflicts, stalled negotiations and inaction. Her failure to address the international challenges Germany faces has allowed problems to fester. Her successor has the unenviable task of lancing the boil. Given how the public liked Merkel's foreign policy style, the new government will be inclined to follow her lead. If so, they will soon discover that inaction is no longer an option.

The coming years will be defined by great power competition between the United States and China. Washington is counting on Germany's support. So far, in classic Merkelian fashion, Berlin has tried to play both sides of the fence, voicing unease about China's actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang while carrying on business as usual and pursuing investment deals with Beijing. In contrast to the United Kingdom and



**MATTHEW KARNITSCHNIG**  
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other US allies that have decided to bar China's Huawei from their 5G networks, Germany has opted to allow the company in, provided its equipment passes a strict security evaluation.

*The Berlin Pulse* suggests that most Germans have no illusions about what side of the US-China divide to be on: two-thirds said the United States was more important to Germany than China, with just under 20 per cent saying China was more important.

Germany has good reasons to be cautious about angering China, however. The country is its second-largest export market after the United States and a swathe of German industry, from auto manufacturers to machinery makers, have invested substantial sums over decades in building factories in China. That reliance did not prevent Germany from recently sending a frigate to the Indo-Pacific. But even that mission, which Germany stressed was not intended to antagonize Beijing, underscored that 'decoupling' from China is not a viable option.

Neither is backing away from the United States. For all the talk of redefining US-German relations following the trauma of the Trump years, Germany has slipped seamlessly back into the transatlantic comfort zone. That is a mistake. Trump may be gone, but the scepticism he roused at home about foreign engagements and the idea that allies such as Germany 'owe' the United States remain alive and well. The way the Biden administration withdrew from Afghanistan was Trumpian: done with almost no consultation with, or even a willingness to consider the views of, allies. It was textbook 'America First'.

So far, President Joe Biden has taken a different tack on Germany. A dyed-in-the-wool transatlanticist, he has pursued it like an eager suitor, going to great lengths to repair the damage Trump inflicted on the relationship. In June, as Merkel stood by his side, Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that the United States has 'no better friend in the world than Germany'.

But does Germany still want to be the United States' friend? *The Berlin Pulse* indicates that large majorities of Germans perceive it as a partner on issues as disparate as free trade, security and human rights. That marks a substantial shift from a year ago when Trump was still in charge.

Despite that reversal, anyone following its recent domestic political debates might be forgiven for concluding that Germany has turned its back on the transatlantic alliance. Much of the political class, especially on the left, seems to have concluded the country does not really need the United States anymore. They question whether Germany should continue to pursue its NATO defence spending commitments and the nuclear-sharing agreement with the United States. But, despite Merkel famously stating in 2017 in a Bavarian beer tent that 'the times where we could fully depend on others have begun to end', reliance on the United States is as strong as ever.

In terms of the economy – as its largest export market – and security, the United States is still Germany's indispensable ally. As *The Berlin Pulse* survey confirms, Germans have lost much of their knee-jerk resistance to foreign military

Would Olaf Scholz as a Chancellor represent Germany's interests in the world rather better, rather worse or as well as Angela Merkel?



engagements when their country's security is at risk or to protect allies and combat terrorism. But Germany still lacks the capacity to act alone. No degree of fantasizing about achieving 'strategic autonomy' in Europe will change that reality any time soon.

What has already changed, however, is Washington's expectations of Germany. Biden might have nothing but praise for the country but, like most American 'nice guys', he wants something in return. That something is action. If the United States is going to continue to guarantee German security, Berlin will have to do more than just pay lip service to the idea of protecting Western interests around the world. That applies not just to China but also to Russia, the Middle East and even Europe.

When it comes to the European Union, the United States wants the same thing from Germany as many of its European partners: leadership. No other country on the continent has the political or economic clout to take on that role.

Leadership requires a willingness to take risks, make unpopular decisions and live with the consequences. It would force Germany, for example to take a much harder line on the likes of Poland and Hungary as the leaders of those countries seek to systematically dismantle the rule of law and democracy. It would mean standing up to Vladimir Putin and not pretending that he can be trusted to respect the territorial integrity of Russia's neighbours. The same applies to China.

As much as Germans bristle at change, they would be wise to accept that it cannot be halted. The only question is whether they will try to shape it or have it forced on them. Merkel's departure opens the door for Europe's largest country to assert itself on the world stage. It is time for Germany's new leadership to walk through it.



# Why Germany is Resistant to Change

A post-Merkel Germany will continue to pursue a neutral foreign policy, which will increase transatlantic divisions

BY HEATHER A. CONLEY

Change is hardly ever desired in Germany. Moreover, German foreign policy is hardly policy. It is rather a complicated mix of historical guilt and what is considered acceptable social behaviour to German society. Changes to German foreign policy are only sought by non-Germans, many of them in the US national security community, who continuously insist that Germany should 'lead'. They are almost always disappointed. On those rare occasions when change does occur, it is sudden and without warning – most memorably in 2015 when Chancellor Angela Merkel decided to welcome 1.5 million refugees.

The lack of change in Germany's international behaviour is firmly rooted in its preferred position of neutrality. In a 2019 Pew Research Center survey, 60 per cent of German respondents said they would not support NATO's Article 5 commitment ('an attack against one is an attack against all') should Russia attack another alliance member. When asked in 2020 what Germany's stance should be in the event of a 'new Cold War' between the United States and China, 82 per cent of German respondents said neutrality as captured in the annual *The Berlin Pulse* survey. When asked what they thought of China's rising influence in that same survey, 43 per cent said they were neutral, but German public opinion may be shifting on China: only 34 per cent would be neutral in 2021.

Therefore, a post-Merkel Germany will be mostly characterized by policy continuity that will largely be negative for transatlantic relations. Uncoordinated transatlantic carbon-tax policies, a lack of resolution on transatlantic data transfers and US technological dominance will widen existing transatlantic disputes and intensify divisions. In addition, the more energy is required in Europe to address deepening divisions between an economically conservative north, a debt-laden south, an illiberal and intolerant east and an impatient west as well as the growing challenges to the supremacy of EU over national law, the less political space for transatlantic problem solving.

## Germany's lack of change

Should the official coalition talks be successful, an SPD-led, *Ampel* coalition will likely say very little about increasing German defence spending and ensuring its nuclear burden sharing responsibility. The coalition will parse its words very carefully on its policies toward Beijing and Moscow, particularly regarding the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, because of the lack of agreement between the SPD and The Greens on these sensitive foreign policy subjects. Despite the evolution in some German thinking about the economic and political challenges that both Beijing and Moscow pose to long-term German interests, the same policies will be followed. Such

policy continuity will be perceived quite negatively from a US perspective.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration has great, but misplaced, hopes that both the current caretaker and future German government will take more decisive action to support Ukraine, push back against Russian energy manipulation of Europe and support a tougher approach to China, particularly following President Biden's controversial decision to not pursue sanctions against German interests in Nord Stream 2 as required by US law.

## Neutrality is no longer an option

German policymakers must be aware that their country becoming a larger and more important Switzerland will reduce NATO's effort to be more robust strategically and militarily, and that this will be in conflict with the EU's security and defence aims. Especially with the embarrassing exposure of European countries' reliance on the US military following its withdrawal from Afghanistan, there will be renewed calls across Europe for a separate European defence posture.

While it is uncertain whether this rhetoric will translate into more significant European defence, Germany should increase its military mobility, redouble its efforts to strengthen NATO as the central political forum and support the alliance's partners – particularly Ukraine and Georgia – in building their defence capabilities. US-German cooperation could be better leveraged in more actively engaging civil society to promote transpar-

ency and accountability in the Western Balkans, Central Europe, the Eastern Partnership countries, Turkey and Russia as an important start. Civil society dialogue and citizen engagement – particularly between young people who seek a more dynamic, climate-focused and less corrupt future – can in turn produce real change. Such an approach will renew democracy at home and abroad while challenging kleptocratic and illiberal regimes.

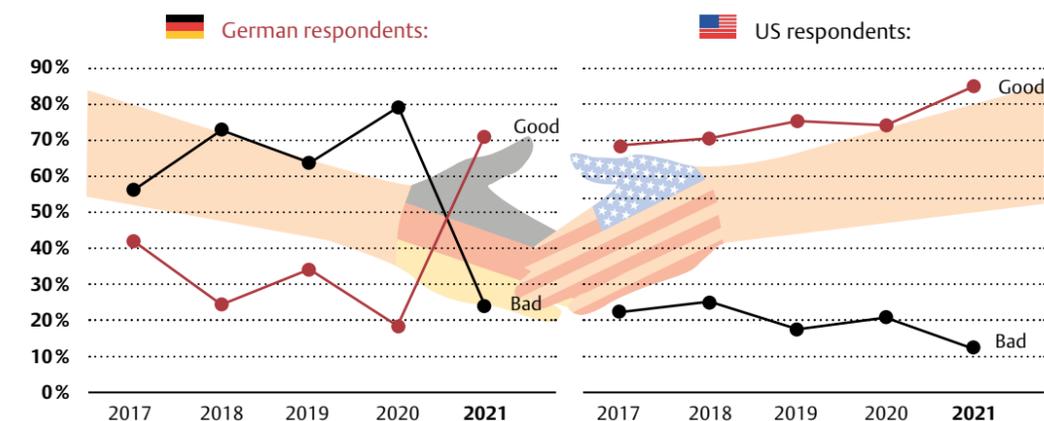
Another opportunity for US-German cooperation is in strengthening shared future technological competitiveness. The Pfizer/BioNTech consortium is an impressive example of joint technological advancement. Big US firms – such as Apple, Google or Tesla – have recently made major investments in Germany. While some may make these investments because of European demands for data localization, they are also investing in the future of Europe's largest economy. Strong US-German technology ties and smart regulation would help counter trade competitors such as China that seek to curtail Germany's industrial advantage.

Change may not be welcome in Germany, but it is coming. The transformation of the international system demands it. The transatlantic relationship can either continue to be the values-based operating system for the international community or cede ground to an illiberal or authoritarian operating system. Neutrality is no longer an option. ✂

### HEATHER A. CONLEY

is senior vice president for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic and director of the Europe, Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC.

How would you rate the current relationship between Germany and the United States?



# Indo-Pacific: 'Prosperity' or 'Power'?

What drives the interest of the West in the Indo-Pacific?

Nobuo Kishi and Kevin Rudd present two perspectives from the region



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**NOBUO KISHI**  
Minister of Defense, Japan

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** The Indo-Pacific is currently on everyone's lips, in the United States but also in Europe. Why?

**KISHI:** It is the centre of vitality for the world. More than half of the global population lives here, and a third of the global trade passes through the South China Sea. Therefore, realizing a stable and autonomous development of the region is essential for global stability and prosperity, which is why also the United States and Europe are strengthening their commitment.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Looking at the strategies and guidelines of the EU and several European

countries for the Indo-Pacific, are they realistic regarding their capacities?

**KISHI:** It is important that they show their position and establish a presence in the region first. This is currently more relevant than actual capabilities.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** How should European engagement look like to be a real asset?

**KISHI:** The deployment of the German frigate Bayern to the Indo-Pacific is a great example for the kind of European engagement we need. It represents Germany's commitment to proactively contribute to establishing peace and stability in the region. Additional involvement and presence of European countries will be needed to achieve this goal.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** But the deployment of the German frigate was also criticized for not being a strong enough signal towards China.

**KISHI:** Japan certainly welcomed the deployment and I do not think it was directed towards a specific country. In August, we conducted our first joint exercise with the German frigate, and we are currently coordinating further exercises. I think this demonstrates our shared values of democracy and an open maritime order.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Can you understand the reluctance of the German public to take part in naval missions to protect freedom of navigation and trade routes?

**KISHI:** Japan also faces internal controversies when it comes to deploying our self-defence forces. Our countries have similar historical backgrounds. But we also share that we have achieved our economic prosperity based on maritime trade. And this heavily depends upon a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law. Therefore, Japan has been steadfast in utilizing our self-defence forces to foster partnership with our neighbours.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What are Japan's greatest security concerns in the region?

**KISHI:** Japan is surrounded by nations with impressive military capabilities. And the frequency of their activities is becoming much more evident recently. Take North Korea, which has launched several ballistic missiles in 2021, or the military presence of China. Less obscure but nonetheless important is the development of so-called grey zone situations – competitions in terms of territory, sovereignty, and economic growth – which increasingly risk spiralling out of control.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Can you give an example?

**KISHI:** In the East China Sea, Chinese coast guard vessels repeatedly intrude into Japan's territorial waters. They are seen for consecutive days in the contiguous zone surrounding the Senkaku Islands, an inherent part of Japan's territory, and regularly approach Japanese fishing boats. In some parts of the South China Sea, China constructs artificial islands, with some of them being militarized, disregarding the protests of its neighbours. These issues are a legitimate concern not only for Japan but also for the entire international community.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** How does Japan plan to preserve regional peace and security?

**KISHI:** First, Japan will bolster its own national defence capabilities as well as enhance deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-US alliance. Enhancing security cooperation with other partners is also important. Second, a stable relationship between China and its regional partners is crucial. At the same time, we cannot sacrifice core values, such as democracy and human rights. We would like to resolve some challenges through a direct high-level exchange with our counterparts in China.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Talking about partners, how will the Quad have developed five years from now?

**KISHI:** The four powers of the Quad have been progressing in several fields, including maritime security, anti-terrorism operations, cybersecurity, humanitarian aid and disaster relief. We hope to continue our defence cooperation and believe that the Quad will increase the possibilities for further cooperation, also with other regional partners.



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**KEVIN RUDD**  
President, Asia Society Policy Institute;  
fmr. Prime Minister of Australia

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Why are Germany and Europe so interested in the Indo-Pacific region lately?

**RUDD:** I think there are three big factors at work. First, that the balance of economic and military power between the United States and China is getting closer than in the past. In the 2020s we are likely to see the Chinese economy becoming the largest in the world. Second, Xi Jinping seeks to change both the regional and the international order in a manner which is more compatible with Chinese interests and values. Third, through cyberspace and its technological capabilities, China's security policy is not just regional but becomes global.



For each of the following issues, do you see the United States as a partner or not?



answer 'neither' ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for all issues

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Do the European Union and its members respond sufficiently to these three developments?

**RUDD:** Ultimately that is a matter for the Europeans. But China will progressively seek to establish an increasingly illiberal international order, much more aligned with a Russian worldview than an American or Western one. China focuses most on Germany in Europe. Therefore, Germany's next government plays an important role in working out which joint strategy with the United States towards China will be possible.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What advice would you give to the next German chancellor regarding Germany's future China policy?

**RUDD:** I think it is too simplistic to look at China exclusively as an economic opportunity. This posture is neither helpful regarding German technological innovation and manufacturing nor consistent with an American worldview. So, my advice would be to be mindful.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Germany is often criticized for being too soft on China, fearing economic consequences. What could we learn from Australia's experience in this regard?

**RUDD:** First, that no country should fear economic coercion. Otherwise, you begin a policy of appeasement, which is unacceptable for countries in the Western political tradition. Second, it makes

collective sense for liberal economies with a commitment to universal human rights to have a common position on China because that makes it much harder for China to pick individual countries off.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Besides cooperation, what should democracies do, to respond to the challenges China poses to them?

**RUDD:** They should lend their collective muscle to reinvigorate the United Nations multilateral system and the Bretton Woods institutions. These institutions are still good, even if the Americans wax and wane depending on whether Republicans or Democrats are governing. And due to this episodic vacuum, China's influence in these UN institutions grows every year. The level of Chinese-Russian collaboration in the UN Security Council for example, is virtually seamless. Therefore, the major democracies with sophisticated economies, global reach and large diplomatic services must rebuild and strengthen the international rules-based order.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** How could this be done?

**RUDD:** For example, by turning the German-French Alliance on Multilateralism into an action programme across major democracies in Europe and around the world. These democracies can work together on an institutional restrengthening of the global governance machinery – with or without the Americans.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Talking about the United States, what is the main driver for the increasing cooperation with other Quad members, such as Japan, India, and Australia?

**RUDD:** It is primarily China's increasing assertiveness. The one triggering event was the Sino-Indian border crisis in June 2020. Without this incident, there would be no Quad today.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Does China underestimate the Quad?

**RUDD:** China has underestimated the extent to which the redirection of its national strategy since 2014 provoked a dialectical response of these countries. Whether it is economic coercion towards Australia, territorial confrontation with Japan or with India along the border, or the macro confrontation with the United States – particularly with regards to Taiwan. This is the reason why the Quad is now gathering strength.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Some analysts foresee an arms race in the Indo-Pacific. Is the Quad a factor for regional destabilization?

**RUDD:** Prior to the establishment of the Quad, China's own military expenditure has increased each year for the last decade by the greatest rate of any regional power in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, strategic stability – both in Europe and in Asia – still hangs off the principle of balance of power. Until today, acting as a balance of power against Russia and previously the Soviet Union is the reason for NATO's existence. Regrettably, the same logic now applies in East Asia. The argument is that stability will only be achieved by balancing one set of powers against the other and not by negotiation between one or several weak powers and a strong military power.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** And do you think that the Quad will be able to balance China?

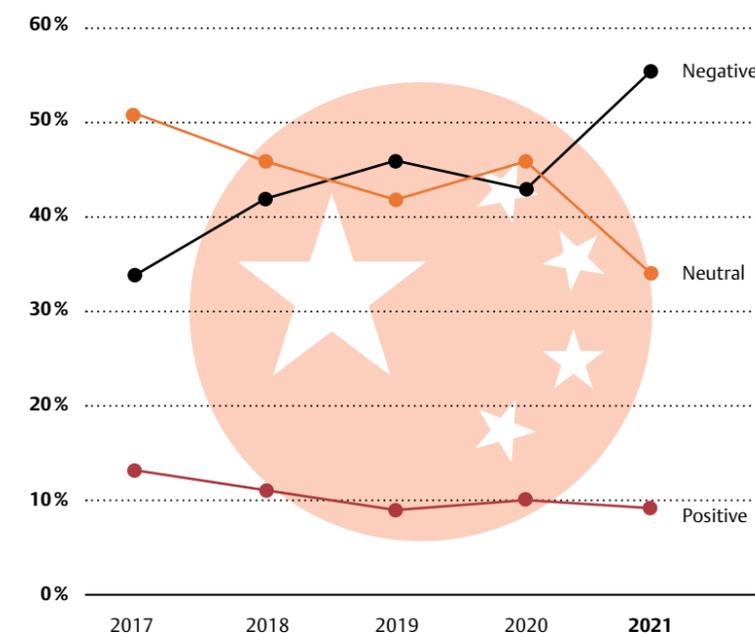
**RUDD:** It is too early to tell. The greatest weakness of the Quad is its lack of an economic dimension. The United States' retreat from trade liberalization in Asia in 2017 was the height of American strategic irresponsibility. China is the largest trading partner of every single country in the Indo-Pacific, except for India. Therefore, the gravitational pull of the Chinese economy is even stronger in Asia than in

Germany or Europe. Unless the United States re-embrace a free trade agreement bigger than the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Quad will not prevail ultimately.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** The German public is rather reluctant, when it comes to sending its armed forces abroad, also for the protection of maritime trade routes. Would you convince them to change their mind?

**RUDD:** In my view, the real question is, whether Germany is going to pursue a European or a global strategy for the future. The latter can be executed in the absence of German military deployment beyond Europe. Germany can have a global security and foreign policy that regards the Indo-Pacific as much as relevant to Germany's interests as Europe, if you aggregate economics, cyber and other non-traditional security threats, human rights and prospectively the rules-based order.

What is your view of China's growing influence?



2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

# Three Visions for Germany in Europe

Three Munich Young Leaders share their expectations of Germany within the European Union

“  
Germany is well positioned to lead and support the EU's External Action Service in its work to build a common technology diplomacy. This will be necessary given the creation of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, that will force both sides of the Atlantic to delineate their priorities in the tech space and given the profound social and economic transformation European countries will undergo in the coming years. Our diplomats will have to search for opportunities in the technology space, through partnerships or by helping attract investment, and at the same time find governance mechanisms for the challenges that rapid technological change brings.”

... A leader in technology diplomacy



© IE University

**MANUEL MUÑIZ**  
Provost, IE University; fmr. State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Spain – Munich Young Leader 2017



**CLAUDIA GAMON**  
Member, European Parliament, Austria – Munich Young Leader 2020

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“  
The current crisis in Afghanistan as well as the ongoing tragedy in Moria have revealed that the European Union must find better ways of dealing with migration and asylum. Germany must join the efforts to establish a truly common European asylum and migration system. With large and influential countries like Germany on our side, we can ensure a union that is governed by European values and principles. Together, we can take a stand against populist rhetoric and focus on European solutions.”

... A partner for a common European asylum and migration system

“  
The past ten years will be remembered as a time of 'stabilocracy' in the Western Balkans: semi-autocratic leaders claiming to secure stability and pretending to espouse European integration; but instead, they rely on clientelist structures, control the media, and produce crises to undermine democracy. Germany must play an essential role in steering EU policy and reviving the initial vision of integration that is less technical and based on values. The next German government should go back to basics – remembering what the EU stands for and originally wanted to achieve.”

... A trailblazer going back to basics



© Körber-stiftung/Gabsch

**ALEKSANDRA JERKOV**  
Member, Executive Committee, Regional Academy for Democratic Development (ADD); fmr. Member, Parliament, Republic of Serbia – Munich Young Leader 2020

# The Russia Divide

EU member states have diverging expectations of Germany's foreign policy towards Russia. A note from the East and from the West

BY JUSTYNA GOTKOWSKA / PIERRE VIMONT

Since 2014, Germany has sent mixed signals to the Kremlin with its Russia policy. On the one hand, it took a tougher line. The German government led the EU's response of introducing sanctions for several Russian illegal actions, such as annexing Crimea, downing Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and cyber and chemical attacks. It also supported the five guiding principles for EU-Russia relations and engaged in allied measures on NATO's eastern flank. On the other hand, Berlin shied away from confrontation with Moscow, opting for political dialogue and economic cooperation instead.

## Germany: disinformation target #1

Even if its aggressive actions against Ukraine have been partially stopped, Russia continues with its attempts to influence the country's foreign and security policy. In addition, Moscow continues the build-up of its armed forces with a menacing posture against eastern NATO members and Ukraine, and it seeks to undermine the EU and NATO through corruption, disinformation and division. In this context, Germany has been the prime target for the Kremlin's playbook, with President Vladimir Putin seeing it as susceptible to Russian manipulations.

Germany should take four measures that would herald a new era in its Russia policy and make its signalling towards Russia less ambiguous.

First, Germans need to broaden their collective memory, which has been heavily influenced by Moscow's narrative of the Second World War. While Germany transferred its guilt for the wartime atrocities against the Soviet Union to Russia as its successor, it neglected war crimes committed against Ukrainians, Belarusians and Poles. This still influences German thinking about *Ostpolitik*, causing a tilt towards a Russia-first strategy, a Ukraine-second policy and a partial negligence of the interests of Poland and the Baltic states. To plan a memorial in Berlin, dedicated to the victims of the Nazi occupation of Poland would be – if prominent – a good start to change the old misleading narratives.

## We need less ambiguous signals towards Russia

Second, Germans need to better understand the nature of the Russian regime. As enticing as the idea of a common European home from Lisbon to Vladivostok might be, for the foreseeable future Russia will stay a kleptocratic and authoritarian regime that suppresses democracy and civil society at home and disseminates malign influence abroad. Germany's next government must tackle the domestic anti-Western moods that favour replacing the country's *Westbindung* with equidistance

between the United States, Russia, and China – or even for an alliance with Moscow.

Third, Germans need to better understand the nature and consequences of economic cooperation with Russia. Its economic prospects have always loomed big in Germany's thinking. Yet, projects such as Nord Stream 1 and 2 prove that Russia does not change through trade. It rather uses such projects to put a wedge in Germany's relations with Central and Eastern European countries and influences its policies by injecting corruption into the German democratic system. In the Nord Stream 2 debacle, Berlin has to abide by all the commitments it agreed upon in the recent US-German statement. Moreover, Germans need to consider who their most important economic partners are. Russia ranked only 14<sup>th</sup> on the list of Germany's main trading partners in 2020 and was overtaken by nearly all Visegrad countries, with Poland ranking fifth.

Fourth, Germans need to become less reluctant to develop and deploy their armed forces. Military instruments are prime means of Russia's pressure against its neighbours and the West. Thus, one can pursue dialogue on security with it only from a position of strength. With changing transatlantic relations and the United States shifting its focus to China, Germany's military potential grows in importance within NATO. Berlin needs to deliver military capabilities, increase the readiness of the *Bundeswehr* and step up its engagement in defence and deterrence. Military cooperation between

Germany, Poland and the United States on NATO's eastern flank is a must.

The next German government needs to tackle the country's weak spots when it comes to Russia and take on more realism and responsibility in the EU and NATO. Germany is no longer able to shape EU Russia policy alone or together with France, thereby overlooking the positions of the Central and Eastern European countries, which are increasingly shared by the Nordic states and others. The failure of the recent Merkel-Macron initiative to resume high-level EU meetings with Putin demonstrates this. Future Franco-German 'solo' runs will only antagonize the rest of the EU further. A strong EU Russia policy can only be forged in cooperation with the Central and Eastern European countries, with Poland as an equal partner. ✂

**JUSTYNA GOTKOWSKA**

coordinates the Regional Security Programme at the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) in Warsaw.

**T**he European Union cannot leave the Russian question for better days. Contrary to what some suggest when promoting strategic patience, time is of the essence as member states confront Russia's growing presence and influence in their eastern and southern neighbourhoods. As one of the global powers in Europe, an important trade and economic partner in the energy field, and

a major security concern – following its armed interventions in Georgia and Ukraine and its military presence in Nagorno-Karabakh – Russia embodies the many contradictions EU members face when reflecting about strategic stability. More crucially perhaps, the Russian issue encapsulates some of the fundamental differences among them, which stem from history and geography and lead to diverging conceptions over the nature of the EU project.

## The divide on Russia undermines the EU

The European order established at the time of the Helsinki Process in the 1970s reflected the balance of forces as it stood then. It was a rather successful attempt at finding a cooperative path in the middle of open confrontation, gradually leading to the end of the Cold War gridlock. But it failed to then shape a new stable order. In the post-Cold War years, from the EU and NATO enlargements to frozen or ongoing conflicts, every new development in Europe added uncertainty to an already precarious situation. Today, the principles and institutions derived from the Helsinki Process look helpless in preserving stability in Europe. And the main reason for this state of play lies in the mutual inability of Russia and its European neighbours to redefine a decent and stable relationship to succeed the Helsinki Process.

If only because the question challenges Germany's vision of Europe's geopolitical future, the country's leaders bear a special responsibility in the definition of a genuine strategy for Russia, which so far keeps evading the EU. There are three reasons reinforcing the feeling of constant misunderstanding among Europeans on the Russian question that has been present since the eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004. First, a growing frustration of Central and Eastern European countries with Western ones, which they perceive as too conciliating to Russia and as pursuing selfish economic interests. Germany's persistent pursuit of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline has created much bitterness. Second, the French-German proposition for a summit meeting with President Vladimir Putin. Third, the insistence of Central and Eastern Euro-

peans on sanctions as the only tool against Russia, which increasingly irritates Western Europeans.

The divide on Russia tops a long series of grievances that risk gradually undermining the EU's political cohesion. And yet the Russian question could represent a more relevant one to start bridging the gap between EU members than some of the divergences related to values and the rule of law. Their divergences on Russia are well defined and have been abundantly discussed. They are not without solutions if there is goodwill from both sides. So, an eventual dialogue with Moscow starts at home: Europeans must listen to each other and recognize that both sides have a point. Central and Eastern Europeans are right when they insist on the need to speak to Russia from a position of strength. But Western Europeans must be heard when they emphasize the limits of a standstill position and call for more agile and proactive diplomacy. A new EU strategy on Russia will need both – a reinvigorated mindset with a more robust and self-assertive European foreign policy and the mutual willingness to shore up the EU's diplomacy.

## Cooperation with Russia is worth trying

Germany's next government should genuinely promote this new mindset, together with France, to get it endorsed by all EU members. While remaining vigilant on Ukraine and committed to the Minsk Process, Berlin and Paris should persist in convincing their EU partners that concrete cooperation with Russia is worth trying. Climate change could be a good case in point, in light of substantial EU decisions to be taken in this field, such as the carbon border tax.

To all European countries – and to Germany in particular – a comprehensive approach towards Russia will be essential when figuring out the future political, security and economic architecture of the continent. ✂

**PIERRE VIMONT**

is senior fellow at Carnegie Europe in Brussels and was executive secretary general of the European External Action Service from 2010 to 2015.



2021: don't know 3%, no answer 2% | 2020: don't know 5%, no answer 3%

# ‘Many Afghans will look at Germany again’

Afghanistan expert and journalist Ahmed Rashid on the future of Western engagement in Central Asia and on regional expectations of Germany



© Thomas Köhler, 2011

**AHMED RASHID**  
Journalist, Author, Pakistan

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What does the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan tell us about the Western attempt to export democracy?

**RASHID:** Democracy, whether we like it or not, is still one of the best systems, and we shouldn't throw it out. As a tribal society, Afghanistan was a particular case. It would have worked better if the West had combined local policy-making with human rights. But such measures were never exploited.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Does the West still have leverage on the Taliban?

**RASHID:** Oh yes, there is a great deal of leverage. First, the Taliban are very desperate for recognition. The second critical issue is getting off the terrorist list, so they can function as a normal government. If you are on the terrorist list, you can't receive help

from multilateral organizations, even food aid will be restricted. That leverage can be exploited and concessions gained.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Will China and Russia fill the gap left by the West?

**RASHID:** They are already filling the gap. Russia and China are the real beneficiaries of this very depressing and failed American attempt to withdraw civilians and troops. Biden never had much sympathy with the population of Afghanistan. He wants to be in East Asia dealing with the Chinese and this will only speed up the withdrawal from Central and South Asia.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Germany offered support for Afghanistan's neighbours receiving most refugees, like Pakistan or Iran. What do you expect from Germany's next government in this regard?

**RASHID:** Germany got such an excellent track record when the Syrians came in 2015. Many people, including Afghans but also Indians or even Pakistani, will look at Germany again. Of course, there is a limit to how much Germans can do. But, by now, Germany should have stimulated a much broader discussion about burden sharing with as many European countries as possible. Germany's next government should take the lead and try to receive Afghan refugees. The country is in a very strong position to do that. ✕

# Postcard from Aotearoa New Zealand

*The relationship between Germany and Aotearoa New Zealand is a very warm one. While we may be distant geographically, we are closely connected through the values we share.*

*These form the basis of a strong partnership that can grow to adapt to new challenges.*

*Germany's voice matters. The influence Germany has, and the respect it commands, is based not just on economic strength but also on the way it conducts itself at home and abroad.*

*At home, Germany embodies our shared values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. In the international context, it is a strong advocate for multilateralism and a rules-based international order. Standing up for 'rules, not muscle' is a critically important principle for Aotearoa New Zealand. Similarly, we share the commitment to inclusion and consensus building to achieve pragmatic solutions. Today's world presents sharp challenges that require fresh thinking and courage. We need to contribute the best of what we have to our shared endeavours. From Aotearoa New Zealand we bring a commitment to international cooperation based on our bicultural values – such as kotahitanga, which focuses on unity and work towards a common purpose, and kaitiakitanga, or the care of our world for future generations. By working together, we can defend against the erosion of the global rules and institutions that have afforded us stability, prosperity and freedom over many decades. We can buttress these systems by developing new structures, such as the free trade agreement between the European Union and Aotearoa New Zealand. Germany's strong and consistent support for this development is deeply appreciated. We also value Germany's direct support for regional stability closer to our home through trade, development assistance, and diplomatic and defence engagement. These make an important contribution to our region's resilience and stability, and they have been reinforced by Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines, which focus on the rule of law and respectful and collaborative relationships. This growth in our direct cooperation offers a positive path forward. We look forward to strengthening our cooperation in areas such as green energy and would welcome Germany's engagement with the small island states of the Pacific, where environmental and climate issues loom large. We may be anchored on different sides of the globe, but we are joined in our commitment to making change that is good for our world, acting with mutual respect and cooperation. Māori cultural values are steeped in metaphors that draw from generations of knowledge and the ever-changing environment. These values are reflected in many proverbs. One that resonates for me is Ahakoa ka mamao, waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa. Quite simply, it means even from a distance, let us remain close, and not far apart.*



**NANAIA MAHUTA**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
Local Government and  
Associate Māori Development,  
New Zealand

# ‘No conversation about Africa without Africans’

Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Africa director, talks about new perspectives for international cooperation, the empowerment of Africa and its implications for migration to Europe



© Eve Sabbagh

**AHUNNA EZIAKONWA**  
Director, Regional Bureau for Africa,  
UNDP, United States

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Back in 2019, you advised the new European Commission to be less short-sighted towards African countries than Europe has been in the past.

**EZIAKONWA:** Indeed, and I think the current process for a new EU-Africa strategy reflects a fundamental shift in this regard. There now is an understanding that the destinies of both regions are intertwined, and that their relationship needs to be based on equal partnership and mutual respect.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What could the European Union and Germany do to achieve a more equal partnership with African countries?

**EZIAKONWA:** The first thing to do is to change a prevailing narrative that arose from a donor-recipient culture and describes African people as dependent on charitable gifts. If you are constantly served an image of disease and misery, little wonder you do not believe in the capacity dwelling in Africa. But there are Africans who are busting their backs to develop their communities and countries. Their voices need to be heard and they need to have a seat at the table.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Talking about having a seat at the table, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed to Germany and France in July to cooperate on Africa. Could this be to the benefit of the continent?

**EZIAKONWA:** There should be no conversation about Africa without Africans. Otherwise, we're going back to times when other countries met and agreed on how to divide up the African continent. And with the African Union as a platform to address the continent collectively, the world no longer has the excuse that there is no one to talk to.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Returning to the present, how did African countries get through the coronavirus pandemic so far?

**EZIAKONWA:** Africa has shown immense resilience. The coronavirus is not our first pandemic, and several African governments and people deployed their experiences from the Ebola outbreak and the

HIV/AIDS epidemic. Africa has gathered several best practices that it can share with the rest of the world.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** For example?

**EZIAKONWA:** The concept of solidarity. The Ethiopian government, for instance, placed its airline at the disposal of the rest of the continent to distribute medical equipment. And regarding innovative solutions. In Togo, a digital cash transfer platform called Novissi was built within ten days and helped the government to identify the poorest of the poor and facilitated the cash transfer to support them.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What about the economic impact of the pandemic?

**EZIAKONWA:** The economy of several African countries depends 80 to 90 per cent on tourism so the downturn is devastating. But African economies will bounce back. There are two complementary ways out of the crisis. First, global solidarity in the form of financial relief measures. Second, a vaccinated population. Most African countries lack the financial resources to get as many vaccines as they need. As we are speaking, the continent's vaccination rate is less than two per cent. To change this, other countries must step in and help.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** South Africa has already called on the World Trade Organization last year to temporarily waive intellectual property rules related to COVID-19. Germany, among other countries, opposes this idea.

**EZIAKONWA:** These countries need to reconsider their position, even in their own interest. We are living in a globalized world today. It is not possible to isolate yourself and let the rest of the world struggle. Especially Germany must understand the

link between Africa's ability to recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and its capacity to handle other priorities, such as the green transformation.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Speaking of Germany, what do you expect of the next German government?

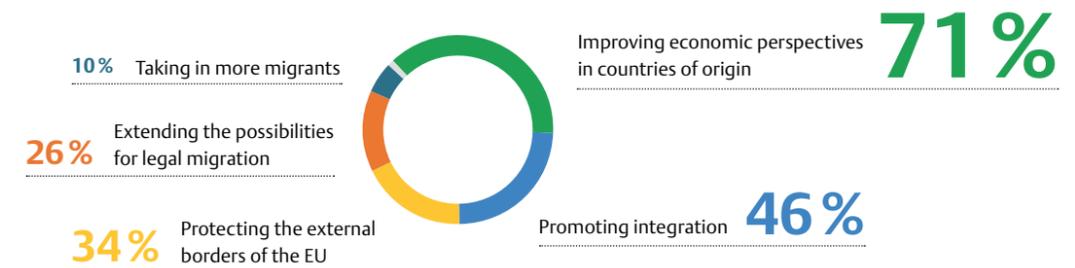
**EZIAKONWA:** To look at Africa as a place where you can set up industry. That is fundamental to give jobs to all these young people who are graduating from university, hungry to contribute to the world. Germany has been a leading force in empowering young Africans with skills. The next government should continue with this concept to go beyond aid because this will lead to an increase of consumption power and an expanding middle class. From a pure trade perspective, this can only be good news for Europe. The same goes regarding the European fear of a surge of migrants.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What would you recommend the next German government regarding its migration policy?

**EZIAKONWA:** The same advice I give everyone preoccupied with this issue – to see migration as an opportunity and not as a crisis. Most African migration, 80 per cent, still takes place within the continent. The small minority that ends up in Europe wants to contribute to the economy. Legal pathways would be one way to overcome the irregular nature of migration, which leads to the loss of lives and creates weird dynamics in the host countries. Migration will happen, it is a human condition. This is my message to the next German government. We should not invest so much energy in trying to stop it. For me, this is a denial of reality.



When dealing with migration and refugees, which measures should Germany and the EU increasingly focus on?



# Brave New World: Can Europe Shape the Future of Tech?



In 2013, Chancellor Angela Merkel famously described the internet as *Neuland* – uncharted territory. Two legislative terms later and at the end of her chancellorship, Germany is still catching up on the seismic shifts of the digital transformation for society, economy and international affairs. For the new government in Berlin, this means not only adapting to the risks and unknowns of digital changes but also grasping the chances in digital change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed major shortcomings in Germany's digital infrastructure. One of the first priorities of the new government must be the urgently needed modernization of the public sector. However, the implications of the digital transformation go far beyond. Technological progress will define the credibility of modern liberal societies in the global tech competition with authoritarian states. If Germany and Europe want to succeed, they need to become a rule-maker rather than a rule-taker, as Caspar Klynge and Ralph Haupter from Microsoft argue.

Digital sovereignty has become the buzzword in Brussels to describe the European Union's push to set its own standards and to reduce reliance on foreign technologies. According to European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, the General Data Protection Regulation has demonstrated how the race for artificial intelligence standards influences the geopolitical landscape. The German public is optimistic about Europe's chances in the global competition: 63 per cent say it can remain competitive vis-à-vis the United States and China in technological innovation.

At the same time, the balance between innovation and regulation is hotly debated: 76 per cent of Germans would like to see the political and economic power of Big Tech curtailed. With the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act, the European Union has taken steps towards regulation and public oversight. But it needs to move fast – as Marietje Schaake argues, leaving a governance gap will inevitably result in other actors filling it. Authoritarian states have sophisticated their use of technology for malicious cyber activities, disinformation and repression. As Xiao Qiang and Andrea Kendall-Taylor explain in their double interview, digital authoritarianism is on the rise. Nevertheless, the public is still hopeful: 51 per cent of Germans and 57 per cent of Americans see an increasingly digitalized world as an opportunity for democracy worldwide. As this chapter shows, a variety of factors determines whether the digital transformation becomes a chance or a challenge. Yet, the ability of the transatlantic community to develop a positive vision of technology governance based on democratic values is certainly the most crucial.



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# A Digital Bill of Rights?

Democracies face two adversaries when fighting for their survival in the digital age

BY MARIETJE SCHAAKE

The hope and excitement about the opportunities of digitization have blinded democratic governments to associated risks for too long. Democratic values such as fair competition, accountability and public health protection are now threatened by an overreliance on a few unaccountable technology companies with large powers. Attacks on democratic institutions such as the SolarWinds hack reveal the security risks hidden in commercial software. And the ongoing ‘winners-take-all’ effects, such as Facebook having the resources to acquire WhatsApp or Instagram only to avoid their competition, are clear. Hard work is needed to catch up and to strengthen democracy.

Throughout the developed world, we lean on corporate data infrastructure, outsource national security to cybersecurity firms and rush to adopt artificial intelligence without fully understanding the societal consequences. Various systems engineered for efficiency or profit are usually not designed to serve the public interest. Vulnerable populations are often facing disproportionate harm as technologies exacerbate existing power relations. Oversight and accountability are increasingly challenging tasks given the lack of transparency into ever-changing, proprietary data-processing systems or algorithms.

The European Union and the United States have taken distinct approaches to handle the technology

and digitization that impacts people’s lives. The EU, unlike the United States, has led in taking a variety of legislative initiatives, but that could not prevent that all over the democratic world corporations have outsized and unchecked power over everything digital. The United States’ role remains the most significant among democratic states, not only as it is home to the innovations of Silicon Valley but also as the main proponent of a hands-off approach to its sprawling technology sector. Over-confidence in the benefits and freedoms that technologies would bring is now backfiring, however. After the storming of the US Capitol on 6 January, as well as after the societal harms from disinformation about COVID-19, the tide is changing in the United States too.

## Over-confidence in technology is backfiring

As the global battle for setting norms and standards for and through technology heats up, which governance framework have the United States and other democracies proposed to counter the authoritarian offering? A vacuum of governance is hard to defend or promote with other states. Leaving a gap will inevitably have it filled by other actors such as China. And, indeed, authoritarian states have moved steadily to sophisticate their use of technology and to expand their production capacity. Mirroring

and cementing top-down, control-maximizing political systems, new technologies are now increasingly part of autocracies’ arsenal.

The challenging task for democratic governments is to catch up while staying true to democratic norms. A coalition of like-minded states offering a coherent and positive vision of democratic technology governance will be even more persuasive. Germany, as a leading nation in the EU, can set the tone by reminding others of the historic lesson that democracy cannot be taken for granted, and the abuse of power by states or companies must be prevented by clear countervailing powers.

## Technology needs to become democratic

To realize this, the status quo in Germany, the EU and other democratic states needs to change. Currently, journalists, civil society and democratic representatives cannot meaningfully access tech companies’ datasets and algorithms or the insights they produce. Addressing that should contribute to the public good and help restore trust – in technology but also in the institutions that govern.

The starting point should be a frank identification of principles that need protecting, such as the rule of law, democratic freedoms and universal human rights. We need to ask ourselves in which cases are these values eroded by the unique characteristics presented by emerging technologies and, if so, how can we proactively reverse these trends?

Second, democratic states should negotiate a shared set of standards and incentives to favour a liberal vision of technology as opposed to the illiberal surveillance-obsessed reality we see developing before our eyes. Germany’s next government, representing the largest European economy, could

articulate such a vision and spearhead the liberal democratic version of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Building on existing laws such as antitrust and non-discrimination ones, due-process principles such as the presumption of innocence and redress, or rule-of-law practices such as independent oversight should produce the fastest and least controversial results. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Efforts to develop specific digital bills of rights or ethics declarations have either failed to make meaningful ground or lack teeth for enforcement. At the same time, obsolete mechanisms and hollowed-out institutions would benefit from being updated and strengthened. Without reviving democratic institutions to deal with digital disruption, their relevance diminishes, and private-sector actors and authoritarian states become more powerful.

**MARIETJE SCHAAKE** is international policy director of the Cyber Policy Center at Stanford University and president of the Cyber Peace Institute in Geneva. From 2009 to 2019 she was member of the European Parliament.

Is an increasingly digital world a threat or an opportunity for democracy around the world?



German respondents:

51%

Opportunity for democracy

41%

Threat to democracy

US respondents:

57%

Opportunity for democracy

40%

Threat to democracy

# Europe's Place at the Digital Frontline

To boost its geopolitical position, the EU is working on 'digital sovereignty'

BY MARIYA GABRIEL

**T**he acceleration of the digital transformation will profoundly affect economics, politics, security and international affairs. To turn it into an opportunity and ensure that it is to the benefit of the people, we need a human-centric digital space in Europe. This includes technology that works for people, a fair and competitive economy, and most importantly an open, democratic and sustainable society that is equipped with digital competencies.

To achieve this, the European Commission works towards closing the digital skills gap among Europeans and give citizens better control over their data.

To enhance its technological edge, the European Union supports the creation of technologies as core drivers of companies' development: 20 per cent of the Recovery Plan for Europe, a €1.8 trillion stimulus package, are dedicated to the digital transformation of the EU and the European Innovation Council supports innovation with a budget of €10.1 billion. EU funding also helped BioNTech, the European pioneer for COVID-19 vaccines, to develop highly digitalized and automated manufacturing technologies.

Its scientific leadership, global regulatory influence, global leading companies and healthy start-up landscape will further boost Europe's geopolitical position when it comes to innovation and new technologies.

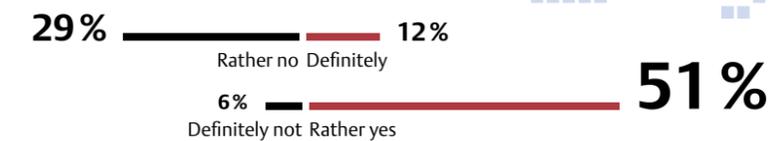
One key industry that has economic but also geopolitical implications for Europe is artificial intelligence (AI). The EU ranks third globally with 13 per cent of all active economic players involved in AI (after the United States with 31 per cent and China with 26 per cent), and accounts for 17 per cent of worldwide provision of AI services based on existing AI solutions, such as integrating existing chatbots into corporate IT infrastructures. Robotics is another example of an industry that plays a key role in the transformation of our societies and economies. Combined with AI it can have a disruptive effect on transport for example, when embedded into autonomous vehicles. It also offers numerous opportunities, such as the re-shoring of previously offshored production processes.

## With players in AI, the EU ranks third globally

However, robotics and AI systems need large amounts of data to be trained and to function properly. This can also lead to challenges, such as job substitution and infringements of fundamental rights.

It is important for the EU to remain at the forefront of scientific and industrial research if we want to shape the way emerging technologies are used and regulated, to set ground rules based on European values of trust and to maintain digital

In the future, will Europe be able to compete against China and the United States in technological innovation and digitalization?



2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

sovereignty. Just as the General Data Protection Regulation set a precedent in the world, the goal of the European Artificial Intelligence Act is to be the first regulatory framework based on European values becoming the standard reference for future frameworks in the rest of the world. To ensure that AI systems used in the EU are safe and ethical, the European Commission has proposed a system to categorize their risk from unacceptable and therefore banned (that is, facial recognition in public spaces) to low and therefore allowed.

Currently Germany, France and Spain are in the lead, accounting for 44 per cent of EU players in AI. A more balanced distribution is key to ensure that member states benefit equally from the digital transformation, and that players engage with each other in sharing technical expertise. This could also help to breach the digital divide across urban and rural areas as well as increase the number of AI-related activities.

Without well-functioning local and regional innovation ecosystems, we will not be able to achieve a strong EU, capable of funding the next wave of breakthrough innovations and diffusing

them quickly and broadly to create jobs and revenues across Europe. Without ambitious EU instruments and a better connection between demand and supply of innovation that goes beyond local, regional or national boundaries, the potential of local actors will remain underdeveloped and limited. Innovation is also not only developed by researchers but increasingly by entrepreneurs and end users. Connecting all these actors matters more than ever.

## An innovation ecosystem that is inclusive and cohesive

One of our key tasks is to reverse the innovation divide of the market and boost Europe's digital performance. Only then can we foster a truly European innovation ecosystem that is fit for purpose, inclusive and cohesive, and from which citizens, businesses and industries everywhere in Europe can benefit.

**MARIYA GABRIEL**  
is European commissioner for innovation, research, culture, education and youth.

# Who Else, If Not Europe?

The EU, especially Germany, can lead the way forward in defining ‘digital sovereignty’ – Big Tech should see this as opportunity

BY CASPER KLYNGE AND RALPH HAUPTER

As difficult as life has been under COVID-19, it would have been much worse without the digital solutions that helped frontline health workers provide care, businesses keep their doors open and kids go to school. But the remarkable digital transformation in response to the pandemic has also raised at least two important questions. First, how can nations benefit from the data and innovation of their citizens and businesses? Second, how to address concerns that a small number of technology companies are amassing too much power through their control of the world’s digital platforms?

At the heart of these questions lie discussions around digital sovereignty. It is a complicated issue that spans everything from the role of technology and data in local and national economic development to the right to privacy and the security of critical infrastructure. For Europe it is fundamentally about wanting to be in control and having the opportunity to define rules independently. This is a valid desire.

Europe is in an ideal position to lead the way in defining sovereignty for the digital age. One way to understand the European project, dating back to the Treaties of Rome, is through Europe’s quest to create a balanced and collaborative approach to sovereignty based on shared values. But also, more importantly, to adapt the concept of sovereignty to challenges during particular moments in European history.

This approach is even more essential in today’s digital world where data flows across territorial borders and the majority of successful businesses operate globally. And, with Europe’s particular history as well as global norm-setting role in mind, who else would be better suited to make sovereignty ‘Fit for the Digital Age’, as the EU Commission calls its digital strategy?

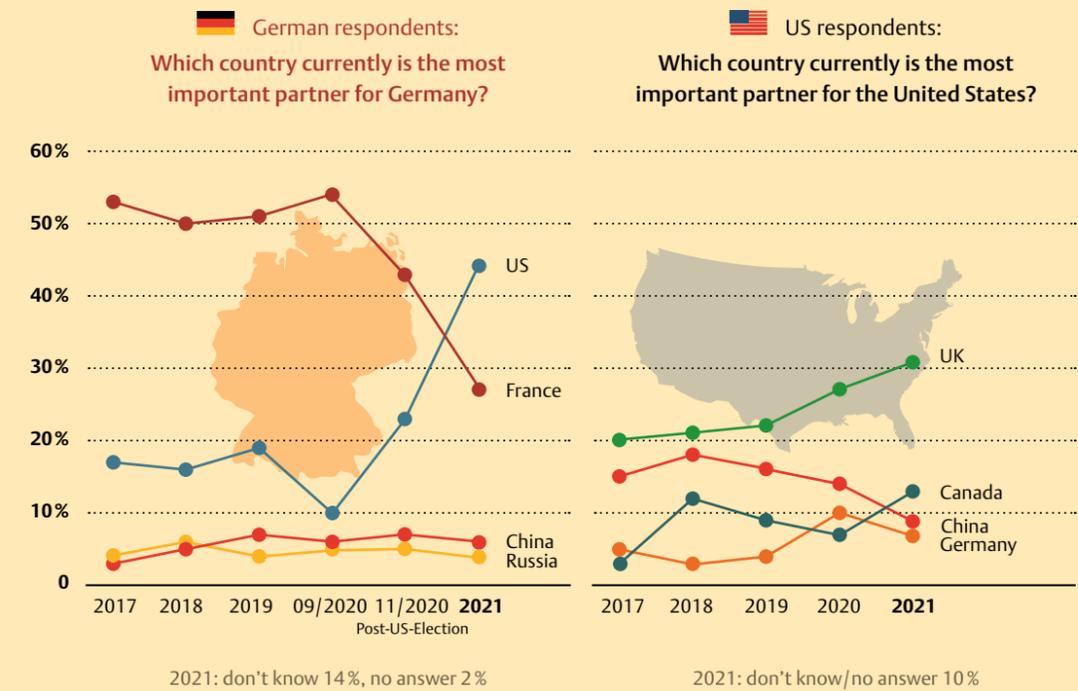
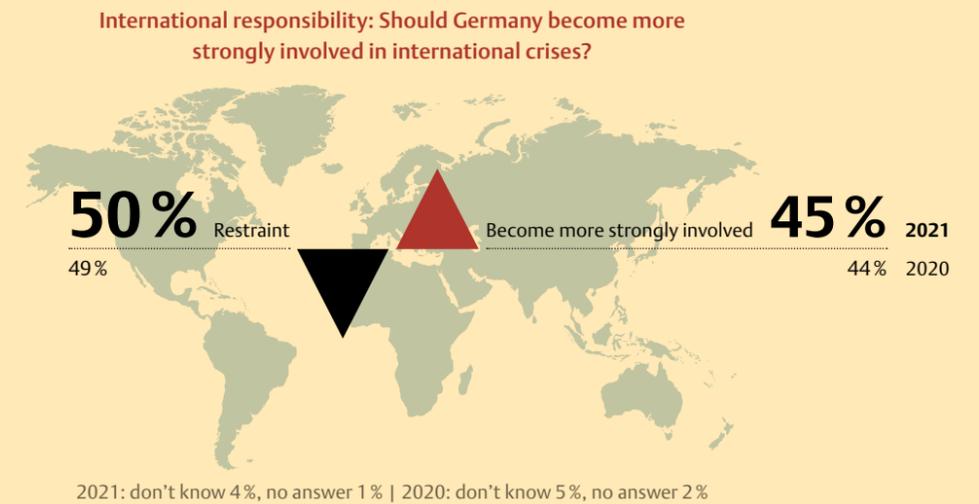
## Europe has a positive influence worldwide

In many ways, Europe is already exerting a strong positive influence on how the world is managing the accelerated digital transformation through the power of its values-based regulatory frameworks. Examples – such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as the global standard for protecting personal information – the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act, have sparked worldwide discussions about how to build safer, more resilient and more competitive digital spaces. Similarly, the Fit for 55 package and the EU’s proposed Artificial Intelligence Act have a chance to do for sustainability and artificial intelligence what GDPR has done for privacy.

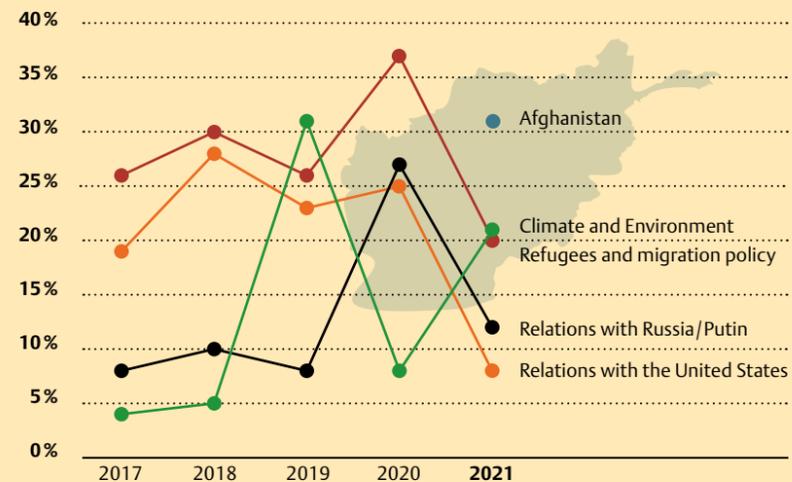
The question now is how do we help build a framework for digital sovereignty that secures Europe’s unique position in a world increasingly

# The Berlin Pulse Survey 2021/22

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by Körber-Stiftung in September and October 2021  
All US results by Pew Research Center

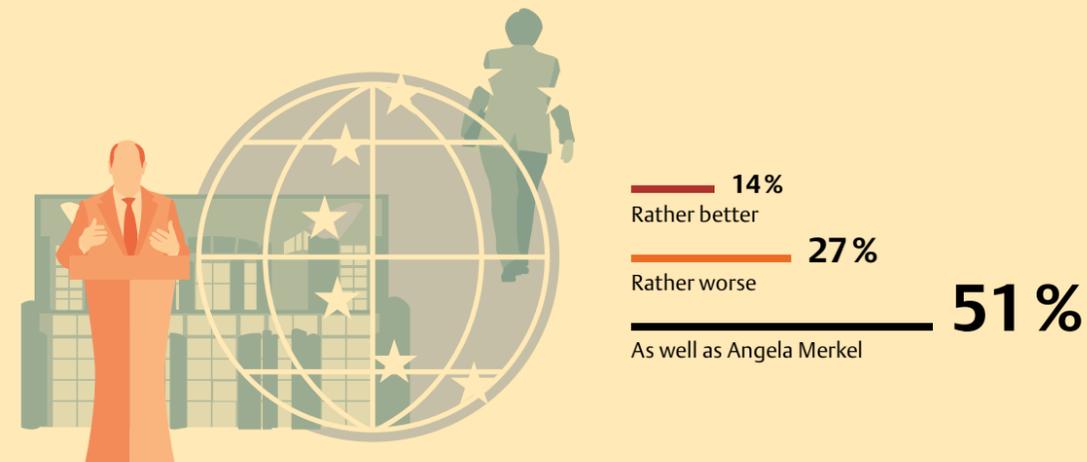


What are the greatest challenges currently facing German foreign policy?



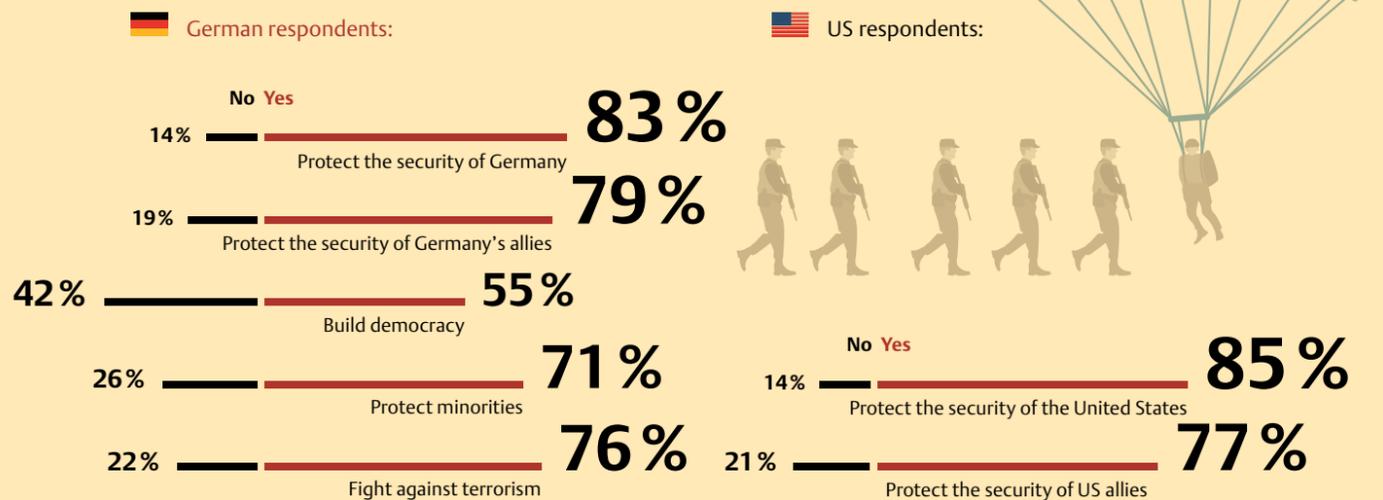
2021: don't know 13%, no answer 4%

Would Olaf Scholz as a Chancellor represent Germany's interests in the world rather better, rather worse or as well as Angela Merkel?



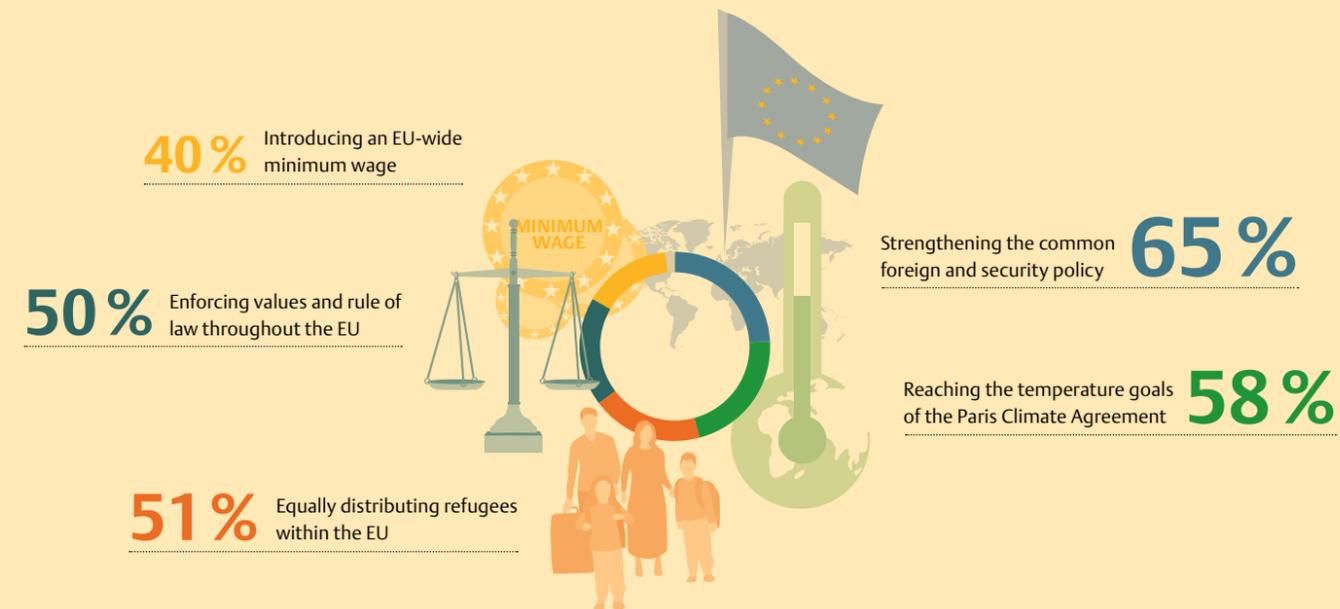
October 2021: don't know 5%, no answer 3%

Should the German Bundeswehr/the US military be involved in foreign conflicts to ... ?



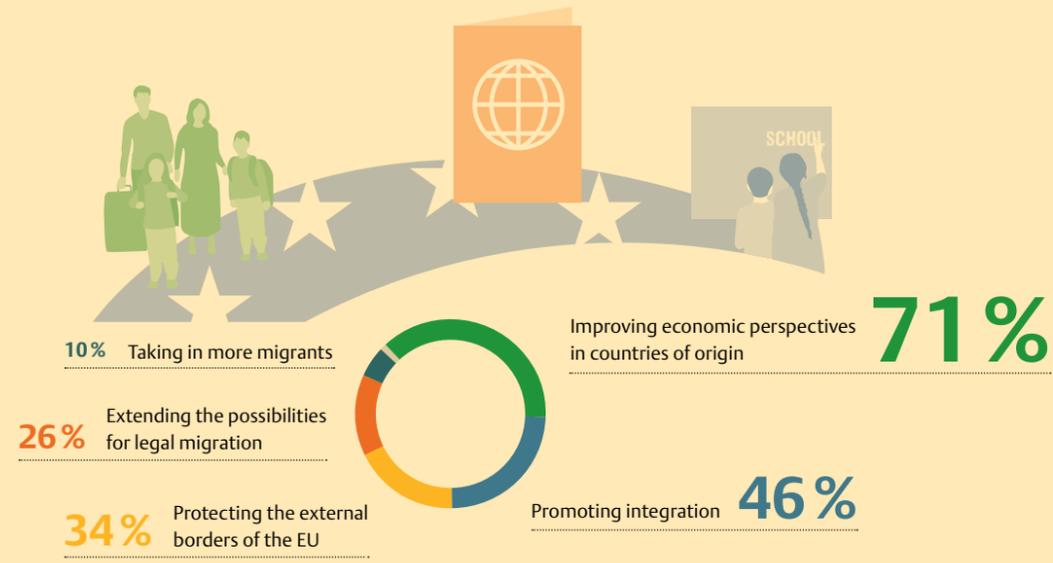
answer 'don't know' ranged from 2 to 3 per cent for all issues

Which of the following goals should Germany's next chancellor particularly promote within the EU?



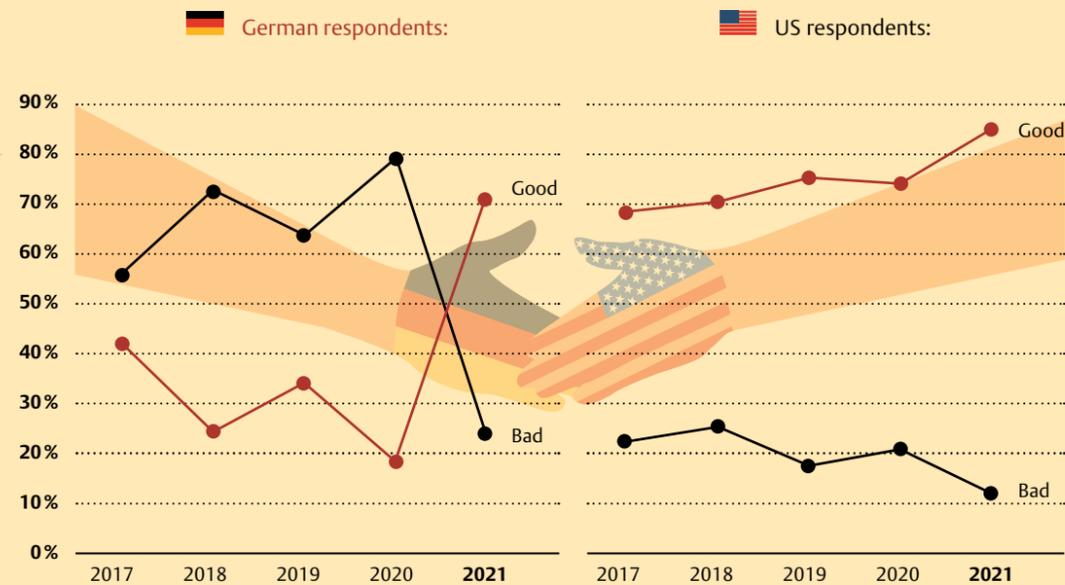
2021: don't know 2%, no answer 2%

When dealing with migration and refugees, which measures should Germany and the EU increasingly focus on?



2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

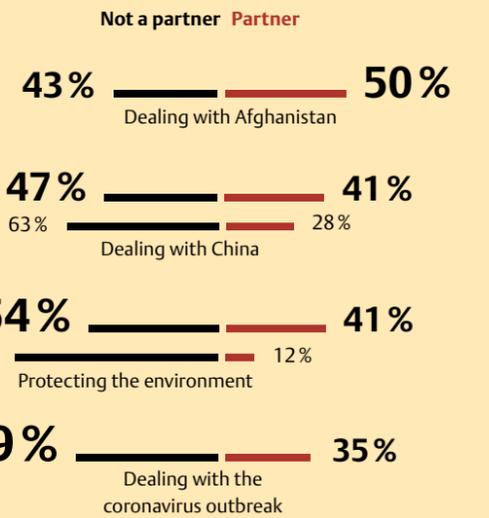
How would you rate the current relationship between Germany and the United States?



2021: don't know 3%, no answer 2%

2021: don't know/no answer 3%

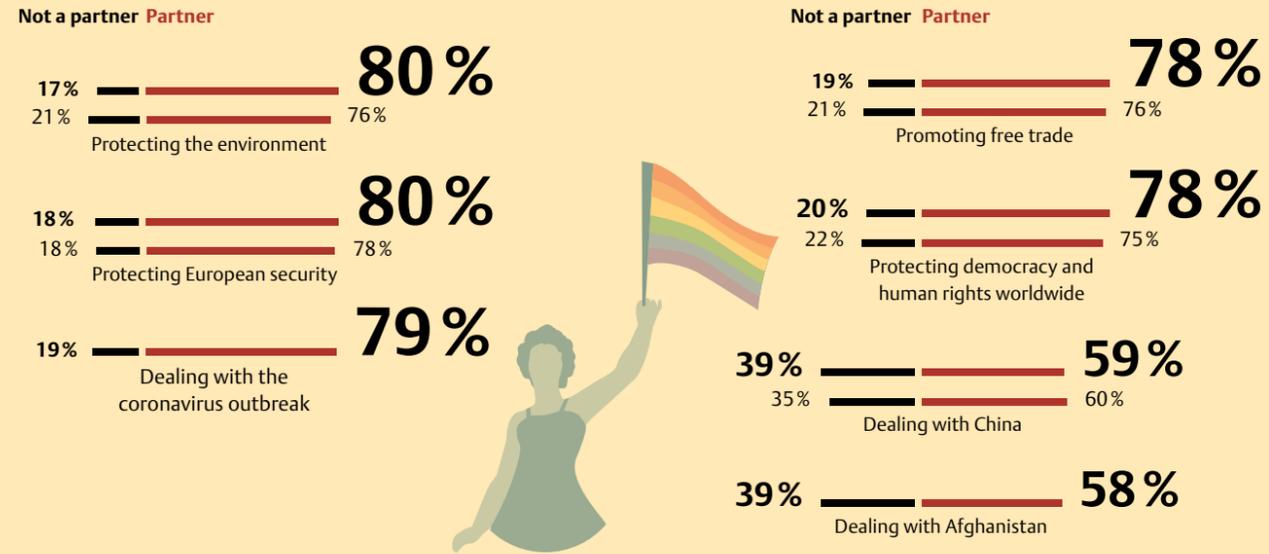
German respondents:  
For each of the following issues, do you see the United States as a partner or not?



answer 'neither' ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for all issues

US respondents:

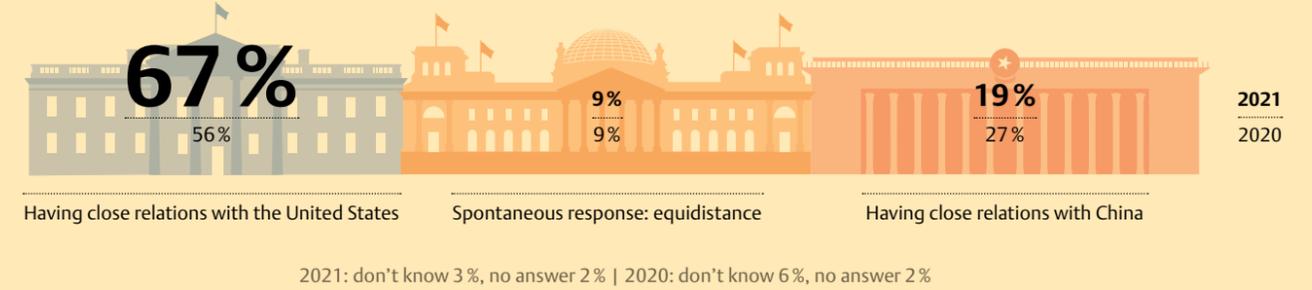
For each of the following issues, do you see Germany as a partner or not?



answer 'neither' ranged from 2 to 5 per cent for all issues

German respondents:

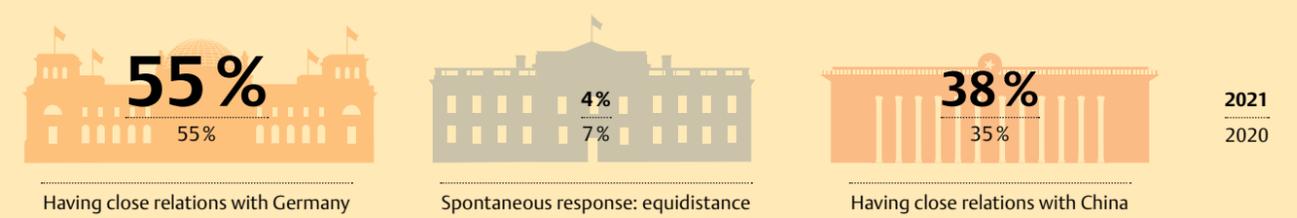
What is more important for Germany ... ?



2021: don't know 3%, no answer 2% | 2020: don't know 6%, no answer 2%

US respondents:

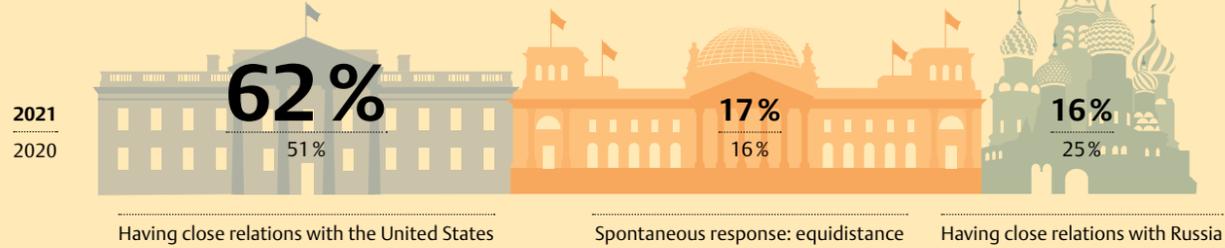
What is more important for the United States ... ?



2021: neither 2%, don't know/no answer 1% | 2020: don't know/no answer 1%

German respondents:

What is more important for Germany ... ?



2021: don't know 3%, no answer 2% | 2020: don't know 5%, no answer 3%

US respondents:

What is more important for the United States ... ?

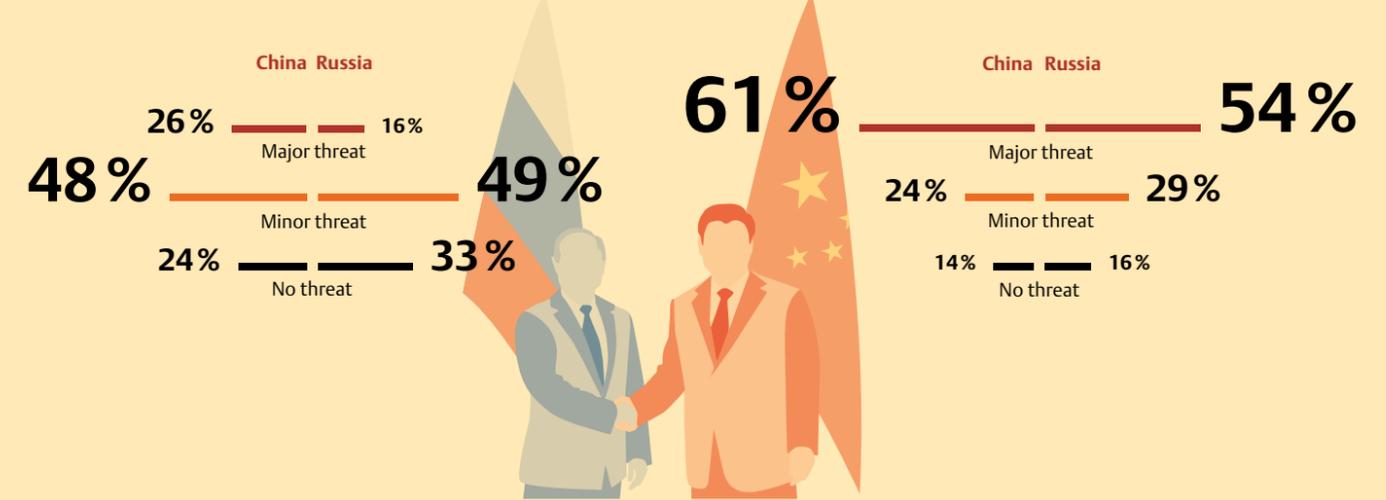


2021: neither 2%, don't know/no answer 1% | 2020: neither 1%, don't know/no answer 3%

Does China/Does Russia represent a major threat, a minor threat, or no threat to German/American values?

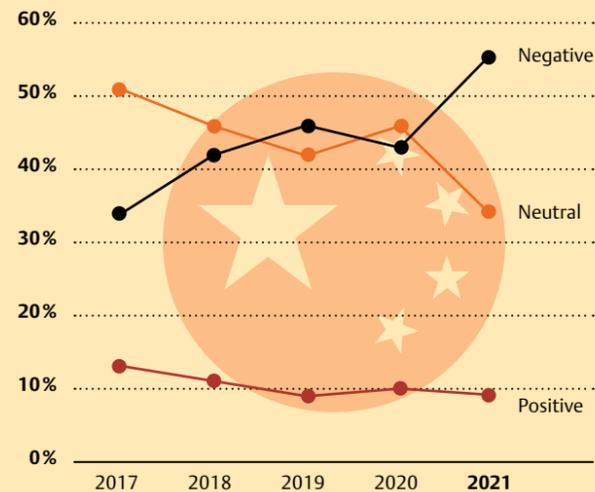
German respondents:

US respondents:



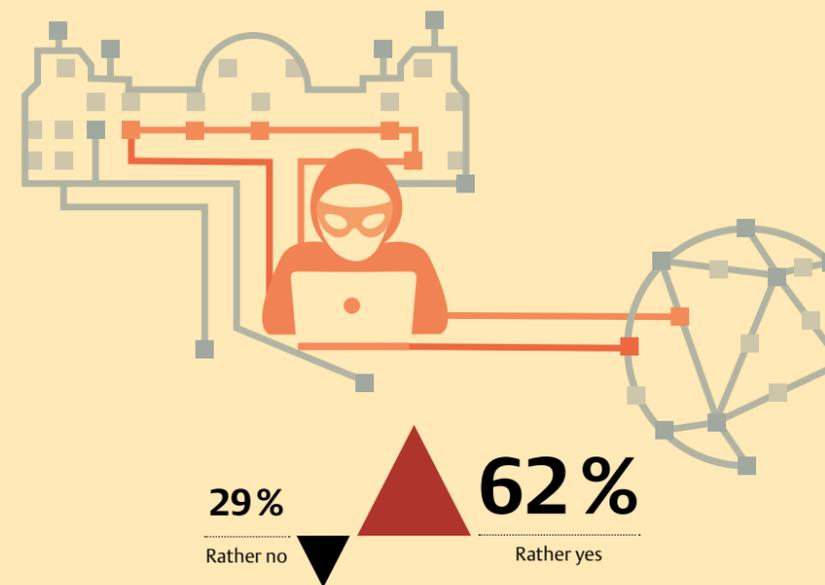
answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for both respondents for both issues

What is your view of China's growing influence?



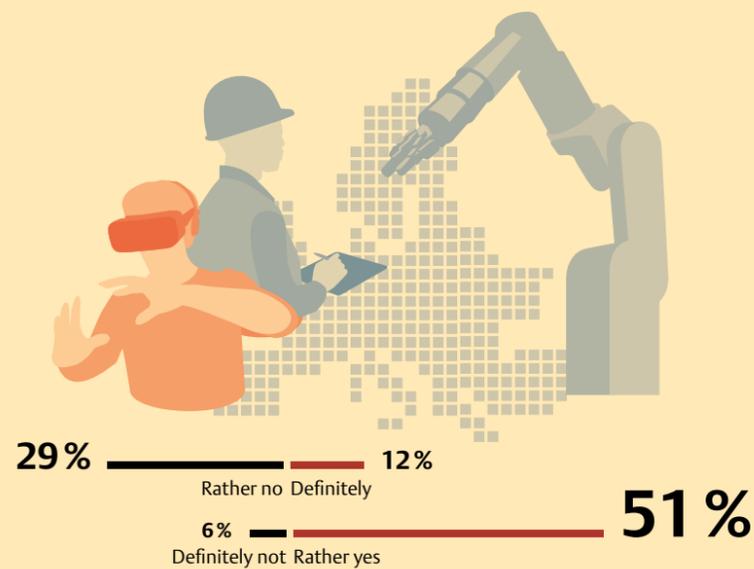
2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

When faced with a cyberattack, should Germany react with offensive countermeasures ('Hackback')?



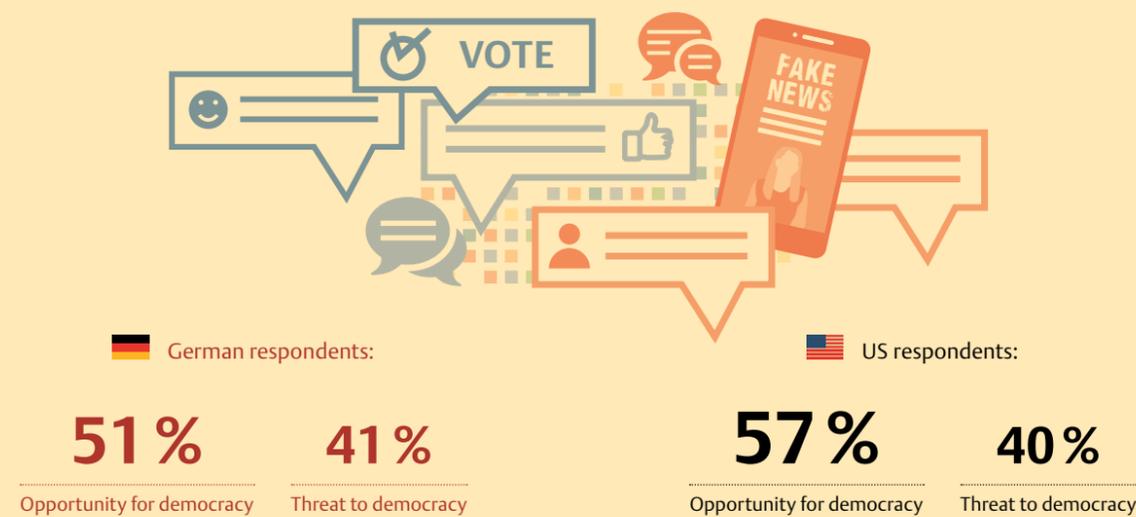
2021: don't know 8%, no answer 1%

In the future, will Europe be able to compete against China and the United States in technological innovation and digitalization?



2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

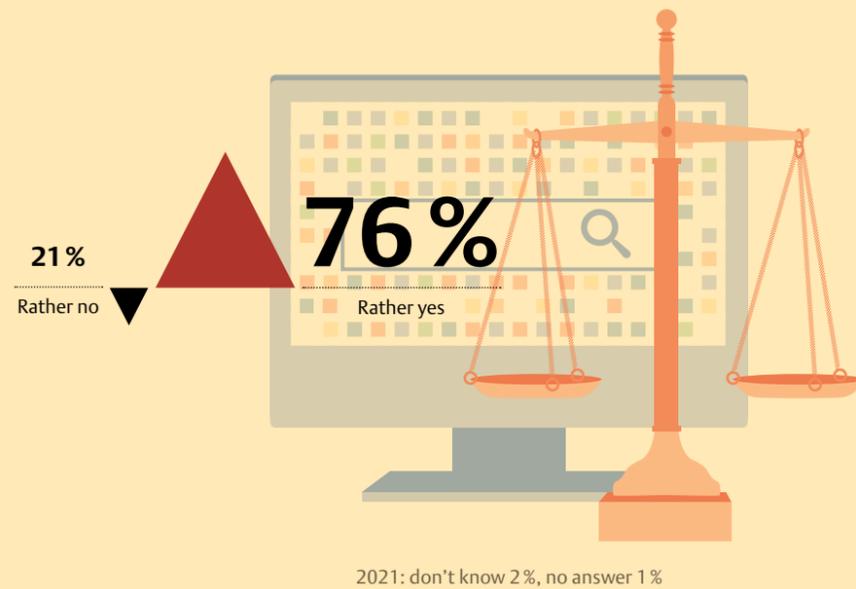
Is an increasingly digital world a threat or an opportunity for democracy around the world?



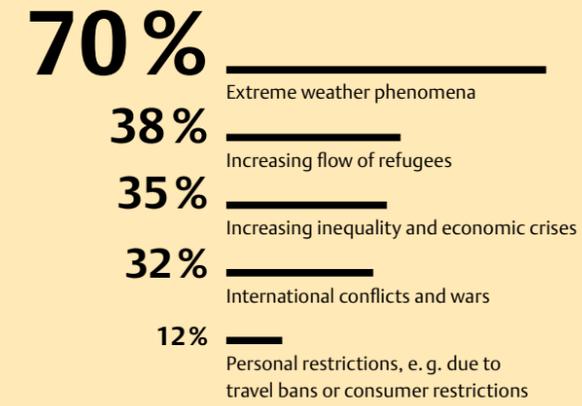
2021: don't know 6%, no answer 2%

2021: don't know/no answer 3%

Should Germany and the EU do more to limit the power of large technology firms (Google, Facebook etc.)?

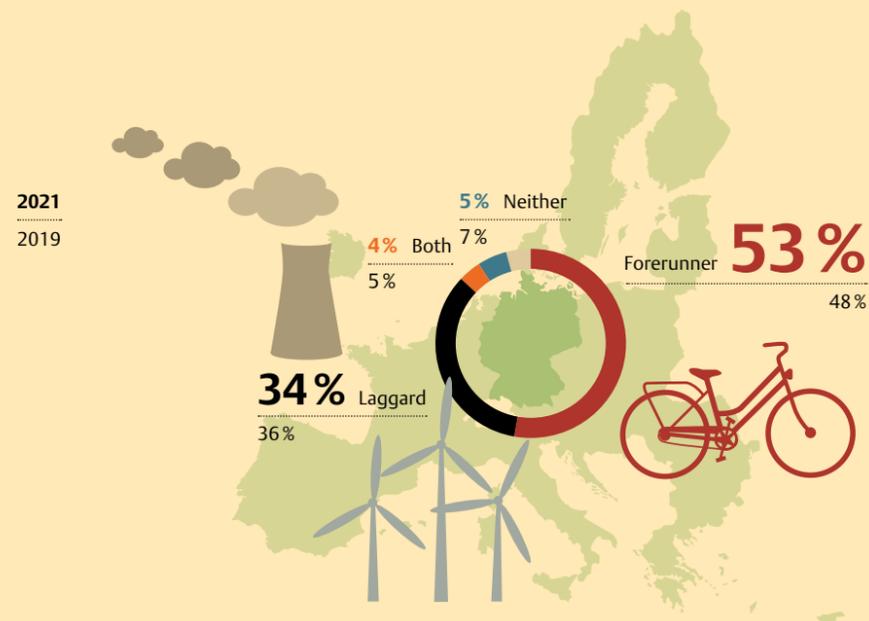


Which possible consequences of climate change worry you the most?



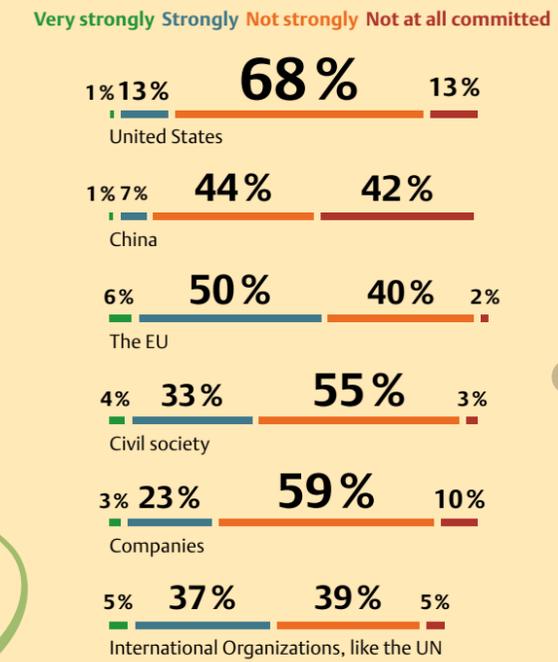
2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

Concerning climate policy, do you see Germany as a forerunner or a laggard in the EU?

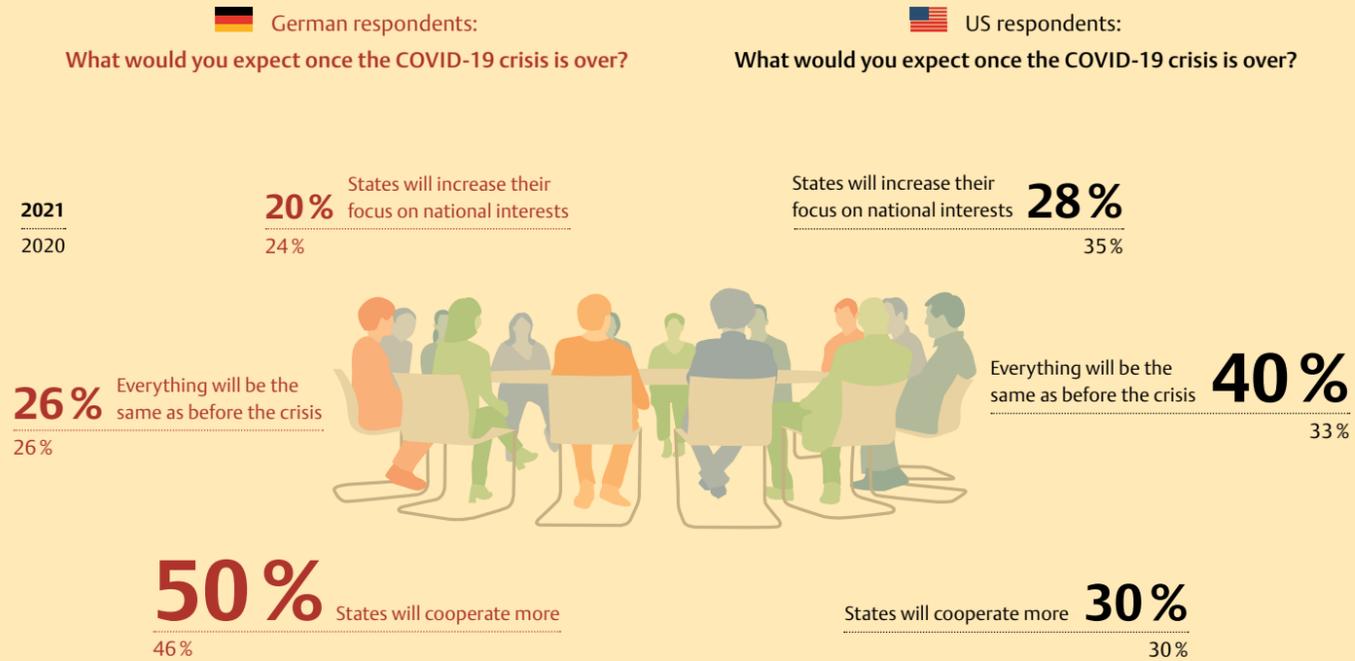


2021: don't know 3%, no answer 1% | 2019: don't know 3%, no answer 1%

How strongly engaged are the following countries or actors in the fight against climate change?



answer 'don't know' ranged from 2 to 14 per cent for all issues



answer 'don't know' ranged from 2 to 4 per cent for both respondents

The survey for Germany was commissioned by Körber-Stiftung and carried out by KANTAR PUBLIC Germany in September 2021 or as indicated in October 2021. Telephone interviews conducted with a representative random sample of 1,162 participants in September and 1,113 participants in October. (Margin of error: < 1.4 per cent for unit values of 5 per cent; < 3.1 per cent for unit values of 50 per cent). German data and results available at [www.theberlinpulse.org](http://www.theberlinpulse.org). The survey for the United States was conducted by SSRS for Pew Research Center in September 2021. Telephone interviews conducted with a representative random sample of 1,008 participants. (Margin of error: +/- 3.98 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.)

driven by technology and digitalization? It starts by acknowledging that Europe's openness is a strength, making it an inspiring global rule-maker, rather than a rule-taker. For several reasons.

### From rule-taker to rule-maker

First, there can be no digital sovereignty without economic opportunity and competitiveness. For European values and institutions to prevail, we need to create the jobs and the economy of tomorrow. Thus, free trade, access to cutting-edge technology and enabling the use of data are crucial. In every industry, successful companies collect and process industrial data from around the world. Businesses of every size are engaging with customers in distant markets.

In Germany, for example, Microsoft has joined forces with car manufacturers and suppliers, as well as technology providers, to form the Open Manufacturing Platform, a global alliance accelerating innovation through open data collaboration. Scaling these models across sectors throughout Germany and Europe will be a powerful step in securing digital sovereignty and in building technology that aligns with Europe's digital agenda. With its strong industrial base and political weight, Germany plays an important role in this regard.

Second, there can be no digital sovereignty without cybersecurity. Today's weapons of cyberwarfare threaten the future of our societies and the stability of our governments, industries and infrastructure. Digital sovereignty demands an approach to cybersecurity built on multilateral cooperation among like-minded governments collaborating with the private sector. And it also requires the tech industry to constantly invest in protecting consumers and the public sector.

### Clear framework for responsible technology

And, third, there can be no digital sovereignty without the rule of law ensuring that technology is trustworthy and compatible with democratic values and institutions. Governments and international

institutions must establish clear legal frameworks that define the responsible use of technology and establish appropriate mechanisms for accountability if companies fail to meet their obligations. Germany's new federal government should draw on the foundational work that has already been done in the country, including in the context of the Data Ethics Commission and the Bundestag's AI Study Commission. The tech industry should see the approaching regulatory framework, driven forward by the EU and member states such as Germany, as a much-needed opportunity to create a common set of 'traffic rules' for the technology we develop and deploy. Resisting regulation is not a strategy.

Europe is uniquely positioned to get all this right. Joining forces with like-minded partners, including across the Atlantic, will help promote European values also against the backdrop of an ongoing digital transformation. The recent launch of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council illustrates the opportunity to strengthen transatlantic collaboration. Germany can set important impulses by pushing for strengthened transatlantic research and development efforts and regulatory cooperation, by advocating for clean tech and sustainability, and by promoting better access to and use of digital technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises. 

**CASPER KLYNGE**  
is vice-president for European government affairs at Microsoft. He has served as Denmark's ambassador to the global tech industry before.

**RALPH HAUPTER**  
is president for Europe, Middle East and Asia at Microsoft.

# Not Mutually Exclusive: Innovation and Regulation

Europe can ensure a democratic digital future –  
if decision-makers act

BY CÉDRIC O

**O**n the democratic oversight of Big Tech, content regulation is textbook material. In early January 2021, right after the US Capitol attack, Twitter and, soon after, Facebook decided to suspend the accounts of President Donald Trump on their platforms. Even if this decision could be justified by the emergency situation at the time, it posed fundamental questions as to how a private actor can unilaterally decide how and when to suspend the account of the democratically elected president.

An overwhelming majority of social media content is moderated by online platforms based on their terms of use but not on the legal framework of the country where the user resides. A social network does not even have an obligation to forbid users from posting content that is prohibited in their countries. From a democratic stance, this is unacceptable. Yet, these platforms have become major public spaces of exchange and communications, gathering billions of citizens around the world, with some political campaigns almost exclusively taking place there. A new public oversight must be designed.

Hateful content existed prior to the development of social media. What is different today is the exceptionally large sounding board the latter represent, enabling this content to go viral. This technology-enabled phenomenon requires

technology-enabled remedies, which is why the automatic detection and removal of some problematic content is more than welcome. However, we not only need social media and platforms to moderate content but also democratic oversight of their moderation policies.

## A task for democracies

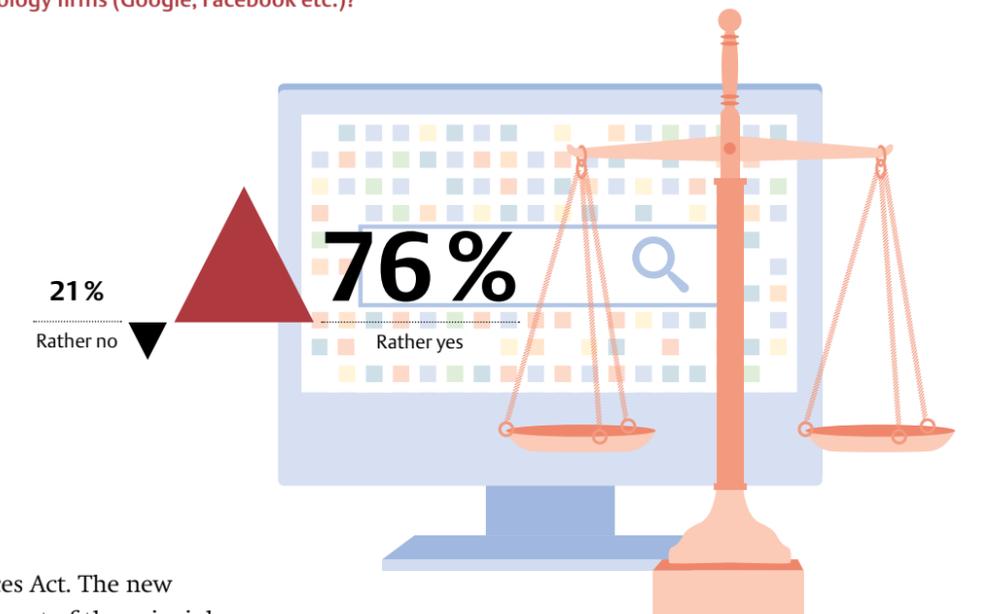
Democracies need to act on this. As online services have become an integral part of our life, we cannot let private actors – as benevolent as they may be – single-handedly rule on who has a right to say what online. Especially, when certain topics in our societies, such as hate speech or cyber bullying, are confronted with a high level of tension. While France and Germany are already doing this, the European Union is about to follow with the Digital Services Act. In Germany, the Network Enforcement (Netz DG) Act, implemented in 2017, obliges social networks with over 2 million German users to delete or block illicit content within a week or within 24 hours when it is manifestly illicit. Under this act, these actors are also required to publish a report on their moderation policy twice a year. While France and Germany agree that a stronger democratic regulatory oversight of online content moderation is necessary, France has adopted a different approach, substantially influenced by

the proposed EU Digital Services Act. The new French act ‘Comforting the respect of the principles of the Republic’ has been adopted in parliament and should come into force shortly. It simply provides that platforms, including search engines, should take appropriate measures to assure appropriate and timely processing of notifications. This main provision is supplemented by several obligations on transparency, terms of use, risk evaluation, mitigation and the protection of freedom of expression.

## Intervene before market dominance is reached

But regulation is not just needed for content; there is a general movement towards a stronger democratic oversight in economic regulation. The ability of digital firms to develop new business models and challenge a variety of monopoly rents is beyond dispute, as are the benefits of their practices for consumers, which explain their tremendous popularity. However, the entrenched power of platforms, with their unprecedented size and a presence spanning several markets, has in recent years created a risk of abuse of their dominant positions. This has reached a point where it seems questionable whether other competitors will ever stand a chance of breaking into the market.

Should Germany and the EU do more to limit the power of large technology firms (Google, Facebook etc.)?



2021: don't know 2%, no answer 1%

In response to this situation, the EU intends to put in place a new *ex ante* regulatory framework: the Digital Markets Act. In contrast to current *ex post* arrangements, regulators will be able to intervene before market dominance is reached. This includes a list of prohibited practices to prevent potential risks to competition or to correct existing deficiencies. This innovative act, currently under negotiation at the EU level, confirms our collective readiness for ambitious action. As European Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton has said, ‘the Internet cannot remain a Wild West’.

As decision-makers, we should always bear in mind the need to preserve what gives digital players their edge: innovation. But as far as Big Tech is concerned, regulation and innovation go hand in hand. Our task is daunting, but it is our responsibility to carry it out if we want our democracies to take back control of their future. ✕

CÉDRIC O

is minister of state for the digital transition and electronic communication of the Republic of France.

# European Cybersecurity Reloaded

The EU and NATO allies should start preparing for an increased number of cyberattacks in the future

BY MERLE MAIGRE

For several years now, cyber has featured at the top of the threat assessments for ministers, diplomats and security officials. States are increasingly weaponizing information to gain advantage, breaking into other countries' networks to steal data, and seeding misinformation or disrupting critical infrastructure. This is exemplified by the Baltic ministers of foreign affairs formally noting in April 2021 an increase in information and cyberattacks directed against European countries, aimed at undercutting their support for the democratic processes in Belarus and Russia.

Since early 2021, the trend of criminal groups using ransomware – a software used to deny targets access to data or to threaten to leak their stolen data unless they pay a ransom – has been growing at a global level. In May, the attack on the US energy company Colonial Pipeline affected the pipeline that provides almost half of the fuel used on the east coast of the United States. A few weeks later, an attack on the Irish healthcare system cut access to diagnostics and medical records for over a week.

How can European decision-makers better anticipate and understand the effects of cyberattacks? First, holding exercises for how to respond to cyberattacks is one of the best ways to raise awareness at the political level. In September 2017, Estonia organized the first-ever cyber exercise for

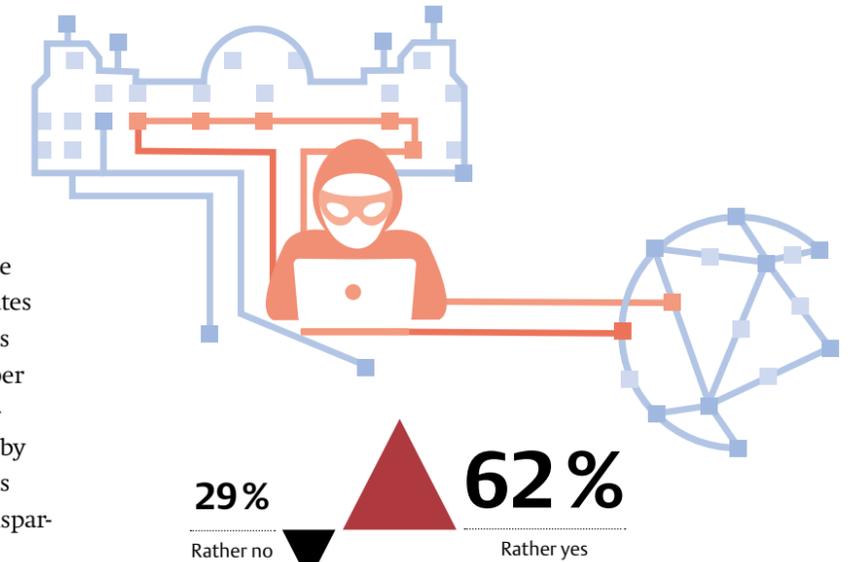
all EU defence ministers, with the NATO secretary-general also attending. Germany's defence minister at the time, Ursula von der Leyen, called it an 'extremely exciting' war game that showed the need for EU governments to be more aware of the impact cyberattacks have on critical infrastructure. In 2018 and 2020 similar exercises were organized with EU home affairs ministers in Helsinki and during the Nordic-Baltic foreign ministers meeting in Tallinn.

## Cyber exercises raise political awareness

Russia's Zapad 2021 military exercise in September in Russia and Belarus included one of the largest uses of electronic warfare. Even if the Baltic-Polish defence leadership did not monitor navigation or communication disruptions during it, it is nevertheless important that NATO continues to adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape.

At the NATO Summit in Brussels in June, the allies endorsed a new policy that highlights collaboration as key to strong cyber defence. One step that NATO and countries on its eastern flank should take is to rehearse jointly responding to cyber threats. Regular cyber exercises should take place in the multinational NATO battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland that are led by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United States.

When faced with a cyberattack, should Germany react with offensive countermeasures ('Hackback')?



2021: don't know 8%, no answer 1%

Second, accountability must be increased by applying existing international law to cyberspace and creating a clear legal framework that regulates state behaviour in it. Accountability also requires transparency and attribution. Until recently, cyber incidents were not discussed publicly by governments. Since 2018, however, public disclosures by several Western powers of details of cyberattacks indicate a new multinational policy of state transparency. Greater public knowledge of cyberattacks makes cyber conflict comprehensible and leads to greater public acceptance of cyber countermeasures.

## Attribution is the basis for self-defence

Ultimately, what matters is that states engaging in unlawful actions using cyber means will not escape without consequences. With attribution, policy-makers show that they know what is going on in networks and can investigate incidents. It also clearly states what unacceptable behaviour is and can help create state practice. Attribution is the basis, under international law, for countermeasures and self-defence.

Third, European decision-makers must respond clearly to harmful actions of other state actors.

The EU Diplomatic Toolbox adopted in 2017 is an example of collectively pre-agreed possible response measures. It offers a framework for joint EU diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities, such as adopting condemning statements, declaring diplomats persona non grata or imposing sanctions on an adversary.

Another example is the CERT-EU Computer Emergency Response Team that provides for a close exchange of information at a technical and operational level in Europe. On top of that, the EU Joint

Cyber Unit proposed by the European Commission in June 2021 aims at bringing together resources and expertise available to the European Union and its member states to prevent, deter and respond to mass cyber incidents and crises. The central pillar of the Joint Cyber Unit is the rapid-reaction teams composed of experts designated by member states. These teams can be deployed when EU countries face a cyber-attack and allow them to call other members for help. Therefore, it is high time for Germany to prepare and think about its role and willingness to help when European allies are in need.

Most real-world crises in the future will have cyber components that require a political and diplomatic response in addition to technical responses. How our national cybersecurity strategies are translated into policies and procedures needs to be understood by all stakeholders. What governments and enterprises – including in Germany – can do today is to prepare to respond and to prepare through regularly engaging in realistic cyber exercises. ✕

**MERLE MAIGRE** is senior cyber expert at the e-Governance Academy in Tallinn.

# ‘Digital tools give repressive governments the upper hand’

Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Xiao Qiang talk about digital repression in China and Russia, its impact on other countries and how Germany should respond



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**ANDREA KENDALL-TAYLOR**  
Director, Transatlantic Security Program, Center for a New American Security (CNAS), United States



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**XIAO QIANG**  
Founder, China Digital Times; Research Scientist, Berkeley, United States

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Are we currently witnessing the end of an era of digital optimism?

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** I hate to be pessimistic but the way some governments are using digital tools is concerning. In the 2000s and 2010s we saw an uptick in the number of protests worldwide, including in places like Egypt or Tunisia, where the public was able to use social media and other digital tools to challenge unresponsive and authoritarian governments. Then, we saw the backlash of authoritarian governments, who learned to co-opt those

same tools to increase repression and control their citizens. Now, we are certainly in a moment when digital tools give repressive governments the upper hand, but with new innovations and an enhanced international response that could quite easily flip.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Xiao, are you more optimistic?

**XIAO:** I am exiled from my home country, China, and fight for greater freedom for people in China and the rest of the world, so I do not have the right to be pessimistic. Until the early 2000s, I believed that digital innovation was great news for repressed

and censored people. But technology has changed. While it used to empower ordinary people, it now helps large corporations to understand customer habits or states to manipulate and control their citizens. Being an optimist at heart, I am highly concerned how technology influences human freedom. Not only in authoritarian countries but also in Europe and the United States.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** How does digital authoritarianism, a way to control citizens through technology, differ from its analogue predecessors?

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** In older authoritarian systems, it took a tremendous amount of regime capacity and resources to execute repression on a massive scale, which many authoritarian regimes simply did not have. Digital tools are lowering these costs, including the risk of backlash from the public. Today, governments can be more targeted in their repression, which makes it easier to do widespread surveillance and identify opponents on a massive scale. Therefore, I would say that repressive tactics have not changed but are supercharged. This means that longstanding authoritarian tactics are made more effective by the use of digital tools.

**XIAO:** It is worth looking at China to illustrate what Andrea just described. I grew up in Mao's China that already controlled every aspect of people's lives. But what is different from analogue times is China's very digitalized society. The Chinese state has access to literally every piece of data or is building up its capacity to get access to it – health data, data from financial transactions, geolocations through telephone companies – there is no privacy protection. Modern digital technologies, particularly Big Data, and artificial intelligence, offer a more effective and targeted way to process information and direct people's choices.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** What is in the digital toolbox of China?

**XIAO:** First, it entails information control through censorship, propaganda and disinformation. This is used, on the one hand, to control the information access of the Chinese public and, on the other hand, to build an image of the Chinese government in the world. In addition, the government uses video and audio surveillance to track people through

projects such as Skynet and Sharp Eyes. Not only the police but also citizens can monitor each other. Finally, the social credit system helps the government to create a digital profile of every citizen.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** And what about Russia's digital toolbox?

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** In Russia, digital authoritarianism relies on three pillars. The first is legal tools. Russia drafts very vague laws and weaponizes them to target members of the opposition and thereby incentivize self-censorship. The second is a discrete online surveillance system called SORM, which allows the regime to filter online content. And the third one is disinformation and the manipulation of the information environment, which helps the regime drown out criticism and inflate perceptions of regime support, lowering the prospects for protest. The Kremlin is also taking steps to disconnect from the global internet.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** This sounds like China's 'Great Firewall'.

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** While Russia and China have their own distinct models of how they have built their internet, they are learning from each other. Russia looks at China's sovereign internet and the greater control of the Chinese Communist Party over its information space. And the Chinese Communist Party has adopted some of the Kremlin's disinformation tactics, acting beyond its borders to sow confusion and obscure the truth as we saw so plainly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** Are there also spillover effects from China to other countries?

**XIAO:** China is exporting its surveillance and censorship technologies to some hundred countries in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Not only but particularly authoritarian regimes find these technologies very convenient for their political goals.

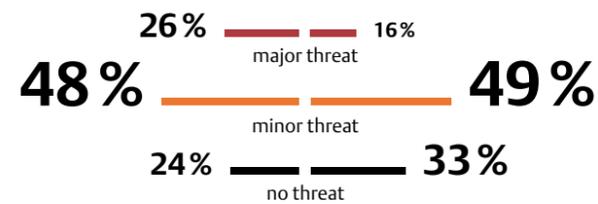
**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG:** The use of technology from Chinese companies was widely discussed with regard to the 5G rollout in Europe. What is your take on this?

**XIAO:** To put it very simply, Huawei is a corporation highly connected to the Chinese state and military. Do not trust Chinese corporations and do not let

Does China/Does Russia represent a major threat, a minor threat, or no threat to German values?



China Russia



answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for both respondents for both issues

them get into your critical information infrastructure, period.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: What about spillover effects from Russia?**

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** Russia and increasingly China are using their digital tools beyond their borders to shape the global information environment. But, in the case of Russia, it does even exponentially at home what it has done outside its borders in liberal democracies.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: How does civil society in China and Russia react to these developments?**

**XIAO:** In China, civil society has almost no power to push back against its government's agenda, for example, on facial recognition. In contrast, many also welcome surveillance technology because it goes hand in hand with digital convenience, safety and economic development.

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** There is also less and less capacity for Russian civil society to do anything about these developments. Repression in Russia has grown markedly, and it has become much more difficult to think about opportunities even with regard to the question of how the international community could support civil society in Russia. The direction that Russia took, particularly in the last year to two years, is extremely concerning. And it is going to be a significant challenge moving forward.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: How should Germany's next government respond?**

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** I hope that the next German government will play a proactive role in EU initiatives, like the Trade and Technology Council with the United States, and set a positive agenda about the appropriate use of technology that reflects democratic norms and values. Germany should also consider giving more support for the use of sanctions against human rights abusers.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: How could this be done?**

**KENDALL-TAYLOR:** For example, with the help of the European Magnitsky Act, a vehicle to target and raise the costs for people using technology to perpetrate human rights abuses. Likewise, efforts to enhance export controls could ensure that Western technologies are not being used for human rights abuses. The Trade and Technology Council ultimately will be a critical forum for addressing these and related issues. The United States is looking for a proactive partner in the European Union, and Germany is a major engine of progress in some of those spaces.

**KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: Xiao, what are your expectations of Germany?**

**XIAO:** Germany, being an important democratic country, should build an alliance with the United States, but also Australia, Japan and other European countries, to defend democratic values and freedom. That includes taking measures on technology, import controls, and an awareness of the rise and influence of Chinese digital authoritarianism in Germany and Europe. The next German chancellor needs to play a bigger role in this and cooperate with leaders of other democracies. ✕

# Need for Change: Last Chance for Climate Diplomacy?





**RONJA SCHELER**  
Programme Director  
International Affairs,  
Körber-Stiftung, Berlin



**ALISA VOGT**  
Programme Director  
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**W**hether we like it or not, climate change will define the future of international affairs. It will alter the way we live, work, trade – and do diplomacy. The German public is mostly worried about extreme weather events as consequences of climate change (70 per cent) but also about conflicts and wars (32 per cent). Accordingly, more and more foreign policy makers in Germany, like others around the globe, acknowledge climate change as a threat multiplier aggravating existing instabilities. But beyond security concerns, the effects of climate change will upend many more tenets of our nations' foreign policies.

To name a few, pursuing international mitigation and adaptation strategies will force states to rethink bilateral relations, to update their development cooperation and to adapt their national economies, including supply chains and trade relationships. The geopolitical shifts caused by an increasing race for resources and by new technologies are only beginning to become apparent. To keep pace with these developments, profound change is needed – domestically and in foreign policy. Some of the transformations will be painful, but they also offer chances to be seized. For instance, the need to achieve carbon neutrality provides a historic opportunity to modernize national economies in line with ecological and digital demands. Franziska Brantner points out how Germany could become the green forerunner that the majority of Germans already believe it is. And Sheikh Hasina provides some best practices for climate adaptation from Bangladesh.

Tackling the consequences of a heating planet is a task for the international community. And, even though multilateral advances can be tedious, as previous negotiations at the UN Climate Change Conference have shown, Patricia Espinosa traces why they are nonetheless indispensable to find common answers to the climate crisis. Dhanasree Jayaram, in contrast, has good arguments for more flexible coalitions of the willing. Regardless of format, as an issue that affects all of humanity, confronting climate change bears the potential to reunite actors in less usual coalitions. With a nod to Russia, Michael Mann reminds us that international cooperation on existential issues like climate change is possible, as seen in the Arctic.

The deteriorating climate affects politics at all levels – domestically and internationally. And it is not only the young generation that has understood that there is a dire need for change to address the related challenges. How could international climate diplomacy adapt and what about the chances of this transformation? Find out on the following pages.



# Towards a Green Success Story?

Five measures that could help Germany in international climate policy

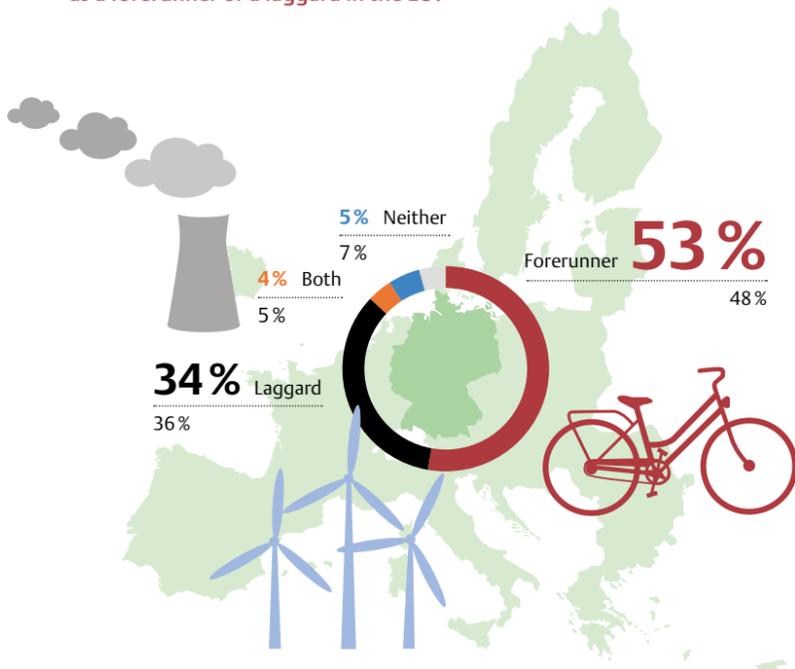
BY FRANZISKA BRANTNER

**T**he socio-ecological transformation of the European economy is the existential task of our time. If we fail to halt climate change, we threaten our prosperity, our social cohesion and our political freedom. Hence, we must align our economy with the goals of climate neutrality. The following five measures could help Germany to become a pioneer in international climate policy and regain its credibility as an environmental champion within the European Union.

- 1. Establish a climate alliance with the United States and 'Paris partnerships' with interested countries, especially in the Global South and in close cooperation with our European partners.** Climate change is a common threat to the international community. Hence, the European Union and the United States must step forward and create a transatlantic climate alliance. By setting ambitious targets and standards and by investing in a green economy, they could lead the way towards climate neutrality. Furthermore, 'Paris partnerships' can support countries in the Global South in transforming their economies and adapting to the dire consequences of climate change, which will affect them in particular. Elements of such partnerships could include joint guidelines for climate-friendly economic stimulus
- 2. Aim for a more coherent overall foreign climate policy.** As Europe's economic powerhouse, Germany must work hard to achieve such a coherent approach through a climate-compatible realignment of European trade policy, an effective supply-chain law, the restructuring of development aid and banks and sustainable financial policies. Transformation requires that multilateral institutions and international structures also support it, which is why the COP26 is only a starting point for a more ambitious international climate policy.
- 3. Make climate protection a competitive advantage.** To enforce a fair level playing field for European and international companies and to protect them from unfair, climate-destroying competition,

programs and uniform product standards to promote key green technologies. In addition, institutionalized exchange processes and dialogue formats should involve all relevant groups of actors, especially civil society, business, science, culture and municipalities, accompanied by regular evaluations and feedback loops. Based on interim successes, the level of ambition can successively be increased or the partnership can be extended to other sectors. This way, Germany could jointly create the necessary conditions to successfully implement the Paris Agreement on a global level.

Concerning climate policy, do you see Germany as a forerunner or a laggard in the EU?



we need a carbon border adjustment mechanism for countries that continue to produce in a climate-damaging way. This will tax imported goods according to the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted during their production. This mechanism provides a strong incentive for third countries to transition to low-emission economies if they want to continue to interact with the European market without disadvantages for their companies. The EU could use potential revenue from such a mechanism to fund climate partnerships in the concerned countries.

- 4. Push for implementation of the European Green Deal and achieve the European climate targets together with France.** With the Fit for 55 package, the European Commission has now presented a suitable package that the member states should quickly discuss and adopt. Germany must play a leading role in this process together with France, which will hold the EU Council presidency from

January 2022. The end of the combustion engine in the EU in 2035 can be a clear signal for other countries to also switch to zero-emission transport. Ideally, this Green Deal could be the blueprint for transformations in other regions. The EU Emissions Trading System could eventually be expanded into a global trading system within the framework of the proposed climate alliance with the United States.

- 5. Invest in ecological and digital modernization.** Companies are in the black with green products. The market for environmental technologies is booming, and German companies should be at the forefront of this ambitious transformation of the economy, especially with regard to the economic recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. German and European industry needs clear framework conditions and government support to expand investments in climate-neutral production and turn green tech into an export hit. Investments create new knowledge and new technologies. New production methods can accelerate planning and construction processes and thus conserve resources. With digital and data-driven innovations, Germany can better reduce energy and resource consumption and become a leader in future technologies. To this end, we should promote and prioritize digital applications and solutions that contribute to resource conservation. Such innovations lay out the possible way towards ecological modernization and will secure Germany's and Europe's role as a green industrial hub in the long run. Yet, it will be crucial that this process takes place in a socially responsible manner, that citizens are supported by means of an energy allowance, and that we invest massively in further training so that employees are fit for new, sustainable jobs.

If we succeed in this socio-ecological transformation in all its dimensions, it can become our international success story. ✕

**FRANZISKA BRANTNER**

is a member of the German Bundestag for Alliance 90/The Greens and her party's spokesperson for European policy.

## Lessons Learned from Bangladesh

Bangladesh is especially affected by negative effects of climate change and can function as role model to the developed and developing world

BY SHEIKH HASINA

**A**s Bangladesh is located at the end of the drainage basin of mighty Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River systems, it is prone to climate-related disasters. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change painted an irreversible and irrefutable future, specifically for South and Southeast Asia. An increasing monsoon will lead to variability in local level rainfall and to frequent and intermittent flooding events. As a result, the coastal zone of Bangladesh will be highly susceptible to inundation and salinity, which will most likely hamper agricultural production and affect food security. Natural disasters linked to climate change are threatening the lives of the people and of future generations of the country.

This impending doom drives us to enhance the resilience of infrastructures, institutional capacity and financial preparedness, and to help vulnerable communities to adapt and manage residual risks. There are several experiences and best practices that Bangladesh can share with developed and developing countries.

As chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) – a coalition of 48 countries from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and South America – Bangladesh has pioneered in the preparation of the comprehensive Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan. Launched in July this year, it is the first plan of a

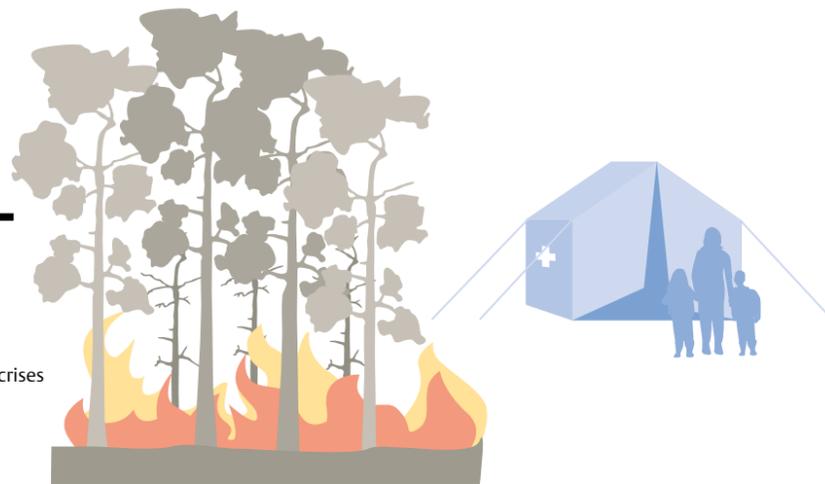
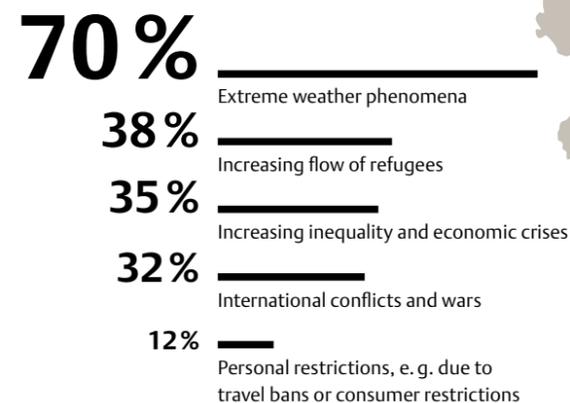
CVF country with a strategic investment framework to mobilize financing through international cooperation to implement climate-resilience initiatives. Germany as a resource-rich country may play an important role in this regard. Key initiatives of the programme include renewable energy, energy-storage infrastructure, power-grid modernization and emission trading. The instrument also extends its spotlights to future-proof Bangladesh's industries, locally led adaptation outcomes and the financial protection of micro, small and medium enterprises. In addition, the development of climate-resilient and nature-based agriculture and fisheries or environment-friendly transport is pivotal to this visionary document.

### Floating agriculture to preserve biodiversity

With the global transition towards the Sustainable Development Goals, my government has initiated an overall plan for Bangladesh to become a developed country by 2041. As a result, the country's economic growth trajectory has maintained smooth momentum even amid the prevailing COVID-19 crisis and despite a rising population, limited land resources and natural disasters.

Simultaneously, we have been boosting the country's agricultural production during the

Which possible consequences of climate change worry you the most?



2021: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

previous 20 years. Our annual rice production has almost tripled between 1971 and 2020. To date, more than 100 high-yielding, modern rice varieties have been developed and distributed to the farmers, including less water-intensive and more heat-tolerant varieties. In addition, floating agriculture is practiced in many areas of Bangladesh to meet the food demand, mitigating societal challenges and ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and the ecosystem.

Bangladesh has also built sea dykes, cyclone shelters and coastal plantations as a green adaptation against cyclonic disasters. Riverbank erosion predictions are provided to ensure the prompt evacuation and to protect millions of lives and properties. The regulatory framework to empower and mobilize local governments and volunteers immediately during a disaster is an effective measure for preparedness.

### A call for collaboration

Finally, my government has given utmost importance to greenbelt development and afforestation, and it has planted over 11.5 million saplings. The coastal zone of Bangladesh is home to the Sundarbans, one of the largest mangrove forests in the world. It has a high capacity to store carbon – up to five times more effectively than terrestrial forests.

As part of the Paris Climate Agreement, Bangladesh is pursuing a sustainable development pathway through limiting global warming. However, achieving these transformations at the pace and scale required will not be possible without the alignment and collaboration of all nations. Thus, Bangladesh calls for collaborative and coordinated actions to develop a global consortium that includes developed and developing countries. Yet, commitments and efforts are needed most from developed countries, such as Germany, as climate change is mainly caused and exacerbated by them. They should assist climate-vulnerable countries through innovative technology transfer, capacity building and enhanced provision for accessing climate finance for adaptation and mitigation. Global communities can take the lead through absolute emission-reduction targets, by developing a shared vision and by exploiting lessons from successful initiatives to scale up for disaster-risk reduction and climate-change adaptation.

Simultaneously, developing nations also need to act responsibly so that the change does not worsen. Bangladesh has been a positive example for such responsible behaviour over the decades.

**SHEIKH HASINA**  
is prime minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

# How to Tackle the Climate Crisis?

Through multilateralism or a coalition of the willing?  
Two different perspectives

BY PATRICIA ESPINOSA / BY DHANASREE JAYARAM

**W**hat is the most practical and effective way to tackle climate change and to protect our societies from its increasingly harmful effects? This question of efficacy is the most relevant question for most people when it comes to climate change.

Simply put, multilateralism is the fundamental approach to address global challenges. And I believe that it is also the best approach to counter the threat of climate change. This has to do with three salient features of multilateral fora, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

### Multilateralism is the best approach to counter climate change

First, universality. The formal instruments that contain the overarching goals of the international community on climate action have been adopted and ratified by nearly every state in the world. There already is a fundamental, pervasive commitment to act against climate change and its deleterious effects that reflects the will of practically all societies.

Second, legitimacy. The fact that decisions are taken and upheld by governments and societies invests international action with a sense of validity and authority that is lacking in unilateral or partial approaches. There can be no effective climate action

without the fundamental acceptance and commitment of those ultimately responsible for turning decisions into actions.

Third, accountability. International institutions are not only answerable to the collective bodies from which their mandates emanate but also to the national governments that make up those deliberative bodies. This fosters transparency and fairness, and it also reinforces the consent and support of authorities and societies.

Those three features render multilateral action more effective than any alternative. In comparison, unilateral or minority strategies are, by definition, limited in scope and would fail to take advantage of many opportunities to further common climate goals, such as the comprehensive approach afforded by Nationally Determined Contributions. These documents establish each country's contribution to emission reduction and, when taken together, provide the highest level of ambition in climate action. Also, as with any other public policy, their lack of legitimacy would translate into lack of cooperation and compliance. Finally, they are unlikely to be conducted with transparency and fairness, fostering suspicion and rejection from other actors.

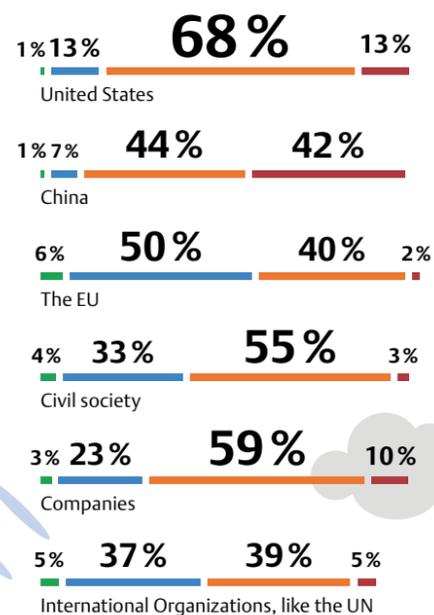
This is not intended to suggest that multilateral organizations are flawless. There is, undoubtedly, room for improvement in the way they respond to

international challenges. But disregarding their potential contribution would be a regrettable waste of knowledge and experience at a time when these are most needed.

There is yet another argument in favour of the multilateral approach against climate change: it does not prevent individual countries or groups of countries from adopting more ambitious policies in terms of magnitude and timeframe. On the contrary, coalitions with more purposeful strategies are compatible with the multilateral process. They can reinforce each other and contribute to an even more successful outcome. This is clearly visible in the many initiatives that are part of the Race to Zero and the Race to Resilience campaigns that are

How strongly engaged are the following countries or actors in the fight against climate change?

Very strongly Strongly Not strongly Not at all committed



promoted by the UNFCCC and supported by hundreds of organizations, corporations and local authorities around the world.

### Multilateral organizations are not flawless

Climate change is a global threat that affects all countries. They should all cooperate to act on a scale commensurate to the urgency of the challenge. Only if they support multilateral efforts with greater readiness, resolve and resources will humanity be able to overcome the greatest threat to its existence – and that of countless living species on the planet – since the beginning of history.

As the host country of the UNFCCC and its sister conventions dedicated to protecting biodiversity and combatting desertification, I am confident that Germany will continue to play an exemplary role in what can be described, without exaggeration, as ‘the issue of our time’: addressing the climate change challenge through ambitious and effective policies, innovative technologies and adequate financial resources.

The best way to overcome indifference, scepticism and even free riding is to ensure universal, legitimate and accountable action based on consent and commitment. There is, as the saying goes, ‘safety in numbers’. As we have painfully learnt, no one will be safe until everyone is safe. ✘

**PATRICIA ESPINOSA**

is executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bonn.

While the climate crisis is materializing in the form of deadly wildfires, floods, droughts and cyclonic storms, international cooperation on global issues is faltering at various levels and the fault lines in the global climate order are becoming starker as rich countries fail to deliver on their promises of climate finance. In some quarters of the Global South, this has even led to calls for a boycott of the COP26 in Glasgow. The increasing tide of nationalism, protectionism

and populism, on the one hand, and geopolitical rivalries, on the other, have led to multilateralism taking a backseat in global climate governance. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has come a long way, its conservative approach towards an unfolding crisis neither raises climate ambition nor achieves climate justice. What the world needs is a climate coalition of the willing that is more dynamic, adaptive and inclusive than multilateral approaches or the existing unilateral or plurilateral forums.

In the current scenario, many decisions are already taken at the G7 and G20. Yet, these global leadership groups have fallen short on issues like phasing out coal, green technology investments in developing countries or accepting their historical responsibility when it comes to burden sharing. The proposal to form climate clubs, involving the highest emitters such as the United States, the European Union or China, could potentially compensate for the absence of a truly global carbon-pricing mechanism and avoid the free-rider problem, which the Paris Agreement has not been able to solve. However, they would most certainly sidestep the demands of developing countries.

### More adaptive and dynamic

While multilateralism often marginalizes local initiatives, global climate governance has taken a definite turn towards a bottom-up approach since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. This shift is characterized by at least three dynamics. First, a climate order in which the UNFCCC principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities are still pivotal, yet the onus on developing countries to reduce emissions increases. Second, more flexible mechanisms introduced by Nationally Determined Contributions. Third – and most importantly – an intensified participation of non-state actors in deciding the future of climate action, as with the International Solar Alliance or the Powering Past Coal Alliance, which encompass the active engagement of regional organizations, businesses, research institutions and civil society organizations.

Private actors are expected to generate a substantial part of future climate finance and it is imperative that they are legitimately streamlined into UNFCCC and other intergovernmental processes. A climate coalition of the willing can be composed of ones based on specific issues or sectors and work towards scaling up local solutions through the support from state actors and other partners. Successful urban climate solutions in one country, for example, could be imbibed by cities in other countries too – something in which city-level governments, urban planners, financiers and NGOs can work together to exchange best practices. Most importantly, these coalitions would be more adept at protecting the interests of the most vulnerable countries, especially in terms of adaptation, as they could mobilize resources from multiple sources.

### Germany needs to build new pillars of cooperation

Germany, the United States and other democracies have been criticized for a lack of decisive climate action, which is often blamed on electoral cycles, leadership changes or bureaucratic inertia. To keep the momentum, there is a need to build a transnational, democratic coalition of the willing that would continue to work towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, irrespective of the structural issues that state actors face. To support this process, Germany’s next government needs to build new pillars of cooperation by diversifying the scope of actors involved in climate diplomacy and by strengthening international partnerships developed by citizens’ movements and other actors. This is not to absolve governments of their responsibility, but it could help bring accountability into an international system that seems to be failing to grasp the scale and urgency of the climate crisis. ✘

**DHANASREE JAYARAM**

is assistant professor at the Department of Geopolitics and International Relations and co-coordinates the Centre for Climate Studies at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) in India.

# Learning from Failure

The experiences gathered during COVID-19 can help us prevent a next crisis caused by climate change

BY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating and unprecedented impact on our globalized world. After nearly two years of seemingly unrelenting shocks, one conclusion is abundantly clear: no nation can respond to the pandemic on its own, regardless of size or power.

As former president of Liberia, I know all too well that sincere promises of ‘never again’ were made by national leaders and the international community after Ebola struck my country and our neighbours. But despite a temporary surge in attention on strengthening health systems and global preparedness, little was done to address the more fundamental shortcomings in the international system.

As co-chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response over the past year, I concluded with other panel members that COVID-19 went from being a localized outbreak to a pandemic because of myriad failures and gaps in pandemic preparedness and response. At the outset, there was a failure to learn from the past. Today, learning the right lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic can not only help us to better respond to future pandemics but also to tackle another existential challenge we face: the climate crisis.

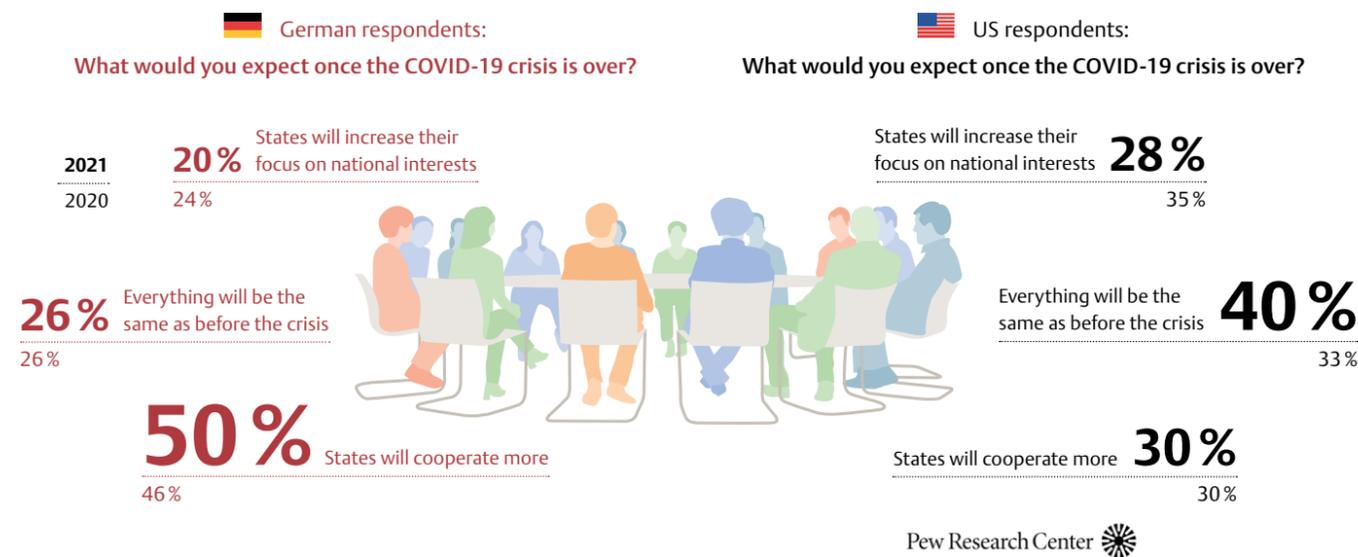
When addressing future challenges, we must first acknowledge that they are always multidimen-

sional. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, is not only a health crisis. It is also a crisis of human rights, equality, justice and sustainability.

With more than 242 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than 4.9 million deaths reported to the World Health Organization, this pandemic is an ongoing disaster. It could have been averted if the countries of the world had heeded the many warnings and prepared their health and surveillance systems – and then, when the outbreak began, if they had moved together in mutual transparency and solidarity. This experience must alert us to better prepare for the consequences of climate change that are no longer preventable. Mitigation efforts will only be successful if states take a collective, proactive and long-term approach. This means rich countries finally delivering on their \$100 billion pledge on climate finance to the developing world, and support for all countries to develop along zero-carbon pathways through technology transfer.

## Vaccine equity has failed

The failure of rich countries to support true vaccine equity has deepened the trust deficit with the nations of the Global South. Yet, we will need trusting international relationships to share responsibilities and secure a successful outcome of future climate summits. Germany’s new government has an



important responsibility to honour collective climate finance promises to poorer nations by scaling up budget allocations and growing the share for adaptation to 50 per cent. The lack of preparedness faced during the COVID-19 crisis, affects the most vulnerable in our societies the most. During the pandemic, tens of millions more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. Women and girls have suffered a disproportionate impact: sexual and reproductive health services have been disrupted; millions of girls whose education has been terminated were put at risk of early forced marriage; and there have been sharp increases in reported domestic violence around the world. We know that the climate change also has a disproportionate and deleterious impact on women and girls, particularly in the developing world. But women’s front-line experience and resilience affords them valuable perspectives on how to adapt to climate change, which should be heeded by policymakers at the national and global level.

Moreover, the pandemic has proved the relevance of science and research. The speed at which the virus genome was sequenced and vaccines were developed was unprecedented in human history, and a tribute to the dedication and collaborative spirit of the world’s scientists. Respecting scientific experts and evidence is similarly crucial for tackling the climate crisis, as is sustained efforts

to tackle ignorance and malign disinformation on social media and other platforms.

Across income levels and political systems, we have found examples of countries that responded well in the first 90 days of the pandemic. The defining factor was competence, not wealth. Those that heeded the lessons of the past, prepared well, were guided by evidence, and engaged communities in the response through transparent communication tended to be more successful.

## Competence matters, not wealth

Today there is a choice – to carry on with business as usual, with the inevitability of a future pandemic and climate catastrophe, or to make real and lasting change. All of us owe it to future generations to show courage and resolve, and to build a better multilateral system that can meet current and future threats to deliver lasting peace, health and prosperity. German leadership in the race to net-zero carbon emissions and true vaccine equity will set a commendable example for the rest of Europe and the world to follow.

**ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF** is a member of The Elders and co-chair of the WHO’s Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. From 2006 until 2018 she was president of Liberia.

# Shared Leadership for Climate Protection?

China is implementing the standards of developed countries into the realities of developing countries – within 30 years

BY WANG YIWEI AND CHEN CHAO

China's per capita emissions are relatively low and even lower if calculated in cumulative terms. A significant share of these fall in the category of subsistence emissions, necessary for securing people's basic needs. In China, there are still over 600 million people with a monthly income of barely 1,000 yuan (€135), while the country goes through a modernization process that is characterized by industrialization and urbanization.

## Carbon neutrality before 2060

As President Xi Jinping emphasized at the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020, China aims to reach its carbon peak before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. The country's climate commitments now require it to make this transition within 30 years. By com-

parison, most developed countries had 60 years to go down this road. But, based on previous experiences, we can expect China to reach this goal ahead of schedule.

To pursue green development, China's government announced the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan in March 2021, which includes energy and climate goals for 2021–25. The Leading Group on Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality, an entity attached to the National Development and Reform Commission, will turn these goals into action plans and targets at the provincial and industry level. This will be done by applying China's '1+N' policy system, in which '1' stands for the general guideline and 'N' refers to the action plans for different sectors.

The huge sacrifice China is making to fulfil its commitments demonstrates its determination and devotion to solving humanity's most crucial issue – the climate crisis. In this process, it perceives

itself as a converter, implementing the standards of developed countries into the realities of developing countries.

China has always valued harmony between humans and nature. This commitment is deeply connected to an understanding that the whole society must be mobilized for the national effort of climate protection. This year's survey results of *The Berlin Pulse* show that Germans have become more sceptical of China, but as a human community we share the same future.

## Trilateral interaction to tackle the climate crisis

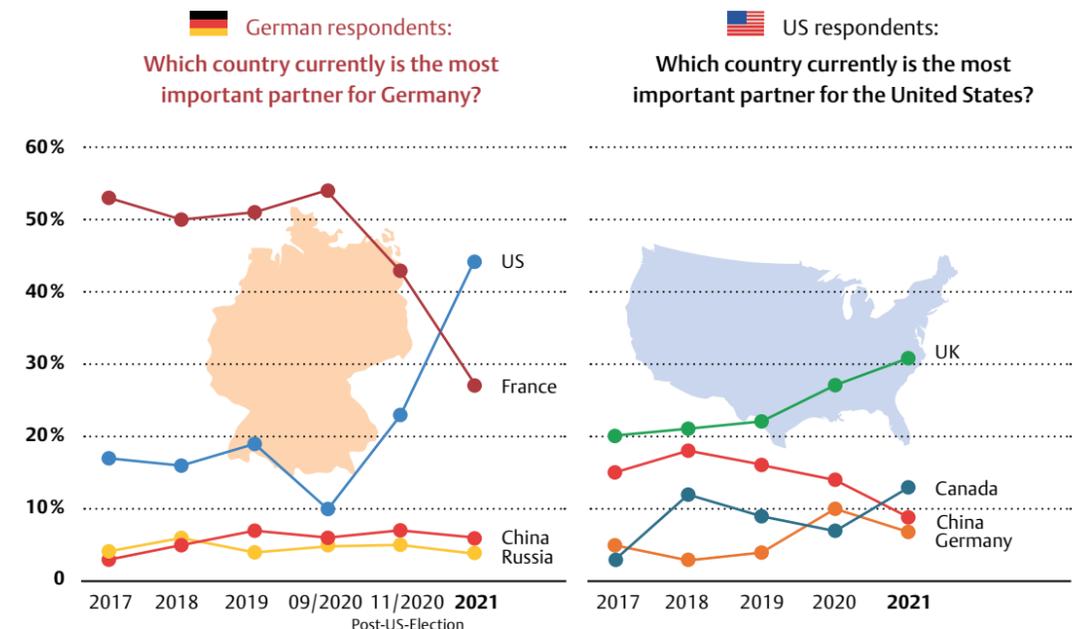
China, the European Union and the United States also shared leadership in the negotiation and enforcement of the Paris Climate Agreement. However, the situation changed dramatically during the Trump administration, exacerbating a leadership deficit in global climate governance and making the previous model of collective leadership difficult to pursue. President Joe Biden has focused his climate policies so far around new-energy firms,

which is why conflicts among domestic interest groups will hinder the United States in achieving great changes.

Climate change will remain an important issue for the trilateral interaction between China, the European Union and the United States. And there is huge scope for practical cooperation on global environmental governance. In addition, the European and US experience on modes of production and transport and the way their energy sector is structured are of great interest and value for China on its path to tackling climate change. In taking this path, China will follow the President Xi's Thought on Ecological Civilization to build a shared future for all life on earth, lead climate action and share responsibilities in international activities for the progress of humanity.

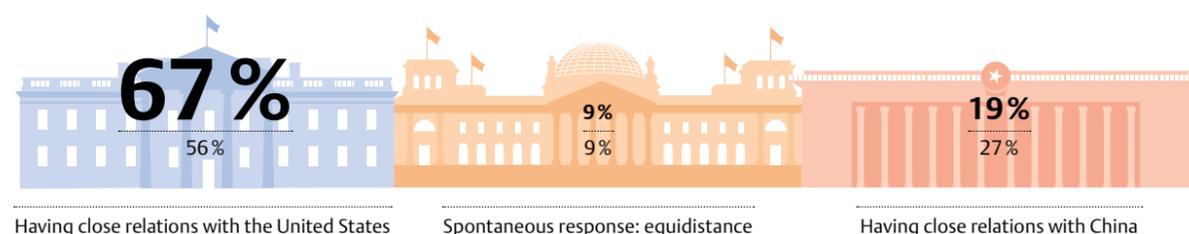
**WANG YIWEI** is Jean Monnet Chair professor and director of the Center for European Union Studies at Renmin University of China.

**CHEN CHAO** is a doctoral candidate at Renmin University of China.



Pew Research Center

What is more important for Germany ... ?



2021  
2020

# All Eyes on the Arctic

Climate change, economic opportunities and geopolitics make European and German attention to the High North a political necessity

BY MICHAEL MANN

As recently as a decade ago, the Arctic was of little interest to people south of the Arctic Circle. This has changed rapidly. Today, the European Union – together with the United States, Canada, Norway and Iceland – recognizes that a safe, sustainable, peaceful and prosperous Arctic is important not just for the region itself but also for the entire world. The reason for the increased attention is that the Arctic is becoming a new stage for some of the most defining issues of our time: climate change, the urgent need for inclusive and sustainable development, and geopolitics.

Climate change is the biggest threat the Arctic is facing, even if it is not the result of Arctic activities but originates from carbon dioxide emissions around the globe. It is happening more than twice as fast there as in other parts of the world. Before long, coastal stretches will become ice-free during summers, and later on during winters too. Melting ice and thawing permafrost are releasing large amounts of methane, further accelerating global warming, which in turn interferes with global weather systems.

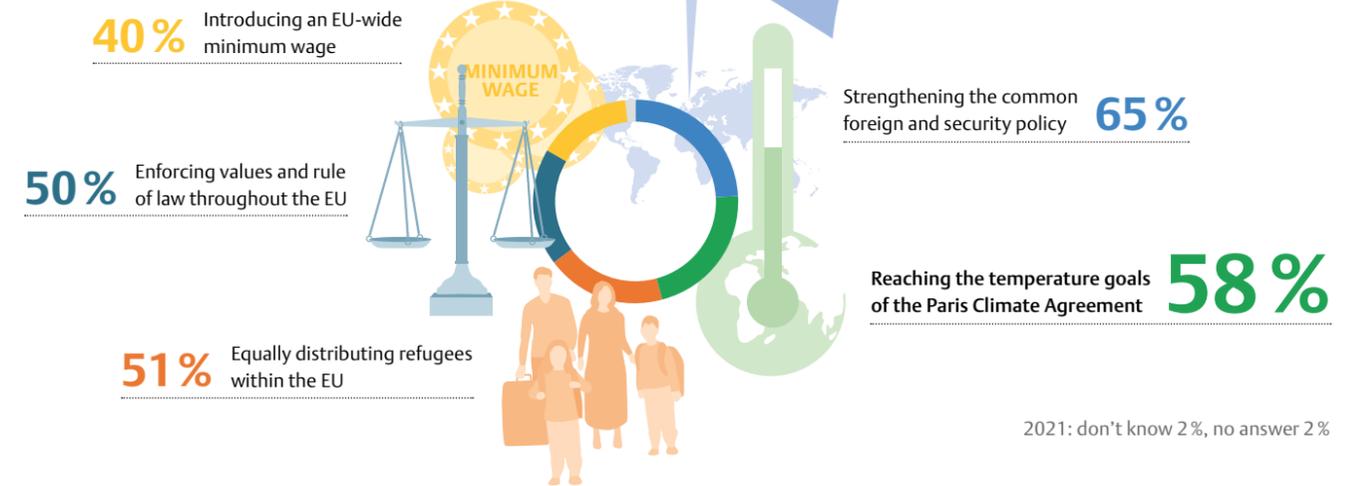
Besides the security threats caused by climate change, receding ice also creates economic opportunities, opening up shipping routes and easing access to oil, gas and minerals. Some of these minerals will play a crucial role in driving the

world's growing demand for technological products, not least those needed for the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. This is of high relevance for the success of the European Green Deal, which depends for its success on just such a technological transition. It also explains why the Arctic is getting more 'crowded', with a growing number of countries like China and Russia extending their engagement there. What happens in the Arctic directly affects European states, including Germany, which is not only an observer to the Arctic Council but also led the recent MOSAiC project, a scientific expedition that explored the Arctic climate system. The EU's Arctic policy is therefore not a matter of convenience but a political necessity.

## The Arctic directly affects Europe

To tackle these challenges and opportunities, the EU is already taking several measures: through its updated Arctic policy, it combines climate and environmental goals with sustainable economic opportunities so that the region can showcase future-compatible job creation and sustainable approaches to connectivity, tourism, fisheries and innovation. The EU Satellite Centre offers secured geospatial analysis and thereby helps the EU to monitor the climate-related security situation in the Arctic region, while a large chunk of the €200

Which of the following goals should Germany's next chancellor particularly promote within the EU?



million spent by the EU on Arctic research between 2014 and 2020 focused on the broader effects of climate change.

There are three reasons why the EU should and will remain engaged in the Arctic, and why Germany's next government also needs to pay attention to the region.

First, the EU is the world's leading proponent of multilateralism, taking the lead in international negotiations – including on climate change – that will be crucial for the future of the Arctic. The eight Arctic states – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States – have the primary responsibility for what happens on their sovereign territory. Yet, many issues affecting the Arctic, such as climate change or biodiversity loss, can only be addressed through regional or multilateral fora. One example is the need for regional or circumpolar cooperation to mitigate the risks of dangerous nuclear waste. Other examples, such as sustainable harvesting of fish stocks or energy and sustainable heating, show that we are more effective working together.

Second, the EU is part of the Arctic – physically with three member states having Arctic territory and as a lawmaker in the European Arctic. It is active in several regional bodies, including the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension, where it works with

Russia, Norway and Iceland, in particular on environmental clean-ups. The Arctic is proof that it is still possible to ensure international cooperation on existential issues like climate change.

## Cooperation on existential issues is possible

Third, the EU is a major consumer of Arctic resources, which are essential for German industries as well, and is a trailblazer in efforts to slow climate change and biodiversity loss. The EU's strategic autonomy in minerals – important for the green transition, space services and future technologies – could be bolstered through sustainable extraction in some parts of the Arctic. The level of interest from European companies to invest in this sector will be key in the years ahead.

The EU is determined to scale up and modernize its engagement to face the serious, even existential, challenges in the Arctic, accelerated by climate change. Germany's next government will have a vital role to play in continuing to support the EU's Arctic policies, building on the success of MOSAiC and helping to raise the profile of Arctic issues in its international diplomatic relations. ✕

MICHAEL MANN  
is EU's special envoy for Arctic matters.

# Berlin Foreign Policy Forum 2021

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### Imprint

'THE BERLIN PULSE. German Foreign Policy',

Representative survey carried out by KANTAR PUBLIC Germany for Körper-Stiftung, September and October 2021

Publisher: Körper-Stiftung, Hamburg

Responsible in accordance with German press law:

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Executive Director International Affairs: Nora Müller

Programme Director: Liana Fix

Conceptualization, analysis and editing: Julia Ganter, Julia Tappeiner, Nicolas Bouchet

Design and production: GROOTHUIS.DE

Litho: Frische Grafik, frische-grafik.de

Print: oeding print GmbH, oeding-print.de

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